

BLIND ALLEYS



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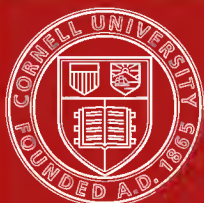
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"SO SAY WE ALL OF US."—Page 221.

BLIND ALLEYS

A NOVEL OF NOWADAYS

BY

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

AUTHOR OF "A CAROLINA CAVALIER," "DOROTHY
SOUTH," "THE MASTER OF WARLOCK," "EVELYN
BYRD," "A DAUGHTER OF THE SOUTH,"
ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. POLLAK



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BLIND ALLEYS.

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To

MRS. LOUISE ROCKWOOD WARDNER

*a generous gentlewoman, who has devoted
a long life to compassionate endeavor
in behalf of those who stood in need,
I dedicate this book with reverence and
profound affection*

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON

Culross, 1906

PREFACE

I do not hold myself responsible for any of the opinions put forward in this book.

They are the opinions, not of the author, but of the personages of the story.

If the author has correctly reported them, his responsibility is at an end.

GEORGE CARY EGGLESTON.

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BLIND ALLEYS

I

THE DEADLY NIGHTSHADE

DR. FIELD STANFIELD was reading an article in one of the Medical Journals, when a clamorous and insistent succession of rings sounded upon his door-bell. The reading was purely incidental, however, to Dr. Field Stanfield's other and more serious occupation. That occupation he would have described as "holding down his office chair."

During the two or three months since he had opened an office of his own, he had become thoroughly used to the work of holding down the chair, so that it distinctly lacked novelty now. But the clamorous ringing at his bell at such a time of night was a new experience, and it gave him an unaccustomed sensation. For during that two or three months he had had perhaps no more than half a hundred bell calls in all, and these had

come in the mornings, during what he called his "office hours," whereas it was now well past midnight, as he discovered by a glance at his watch as he rose to open the door. Indeed, it was nearly two of the clock, and the young doctor was puzzled to guess the wherefore of so late a ring at his bell. But as to the urgency of purpose behind it he was left in no doubt, for before he could reach the door there was another and a prolonged jangling of the bell.

"Come quick — there's been a murder!" was all that the excited messenger said when the door was thrown open. Dr. Stanfield whimsically wondered of what use his skill was expected to be to a murdered man, but he understood. Quickly possessing himself of his pocket instrument case and of his little case of emergency medicines, he followed the messenger, who led the way to the side door of one of the most disreputable dives in the town. At the door a burly ruffian, proprietor of the place, flushed with liquor and excited by crime, sought to bar his entrance. His activity in that respect was interfered with by a young man whose clean-cut features and general air of culture made his presence in such a place seem to the young doctor a

matter for wonderment. But the young man gave him no time for speculation or for questioning.

"Come in quick, Doctor," he said in the tone of a gentleman. "There's no time to waste. I only hope you're not too late."

Entering, the doctor found a man stretched upon the floor, insensible, and bleeding profusely from several wounds. After a hasty examination, assisted by the young man, he took measures to stop the dangerous hemorrhages, while the surly proprietor of the place looked on in a drunken, half-comprehending way. Presently the doctor turned to the young man and asked:—

"Has anybody sent in a call for an ambulance? Where are the police?"

"You git out o' here, quick!" interrupted the proprietor, advancing threateningly. "We ain't a-goin' to have no police and no ambulance neither. Git out, I tell you!"

The man was big and burly, while Field Stanfield was a slender young man, showing far less of muscularity under his clothing than he in fact possessed. But Stanfield made no motion to indicate a purpose of obeying the mandate. On the contrary, he bent again over his patient, but

as he did so, the young man who had sent for him saw him pass his right hand under his coat, and seemingly withdraw some small object, which he kept concealed in his hand and coat sleeve.

“Look out!” suddenly exclaimed the young man, grasping a chair for weapon. “We’ve got a fight on our hands.”

As Stanfield straightened himself up, the burly brute, who had been watching his proceedings, rushed at him with a bottle in one hand and a huge ice-pick in the other. Obviously he meant murder, and the young man by the doctor’s side raised his chair, meaning to brain the assailant. But before a blow could be struck by either, Dr. Field Stanfield, still holding in his hand the little thing, whatever it was, that he had taken from his breast pocket, suddenly dropped to the floor, and with the nimbleness of a cat, and somewhat the motion of one, rushed upon the saloon keeper’s legs, completely knocking them from under him. The man fell, face foremost, with all his two hundred pounds of weight, and instantly the doctor stood with one foot upon each of the prostrate figure’s hands, calling to the young man, who seemed to be standing his friend:—

“Don’t strike him!” for the chair was swung

high in air for that purpose — “don’t strike him! Sit down on his head for just a minute. He’ll give no trouble after that.”

The event justified the confident prediction, for after a futile effort or two to free himself, the murderous keeper of the place seemed to suffer a general muscular collapse.

“That will do,” said the doctor, stepping off the imprisoned hands. “He’ll sleep now.”

“He’s dying, I think,” said the young man, scanning the ruffian’s face.

“Not at all,” answered the doctor. “He’ll sleep profoundly for twelve or fifteen hours, and then wake up with the driest mouth he ever had in his life. That’s all.” Then, turning to the bootblack, who had been sent to call him, and who was the only other person in the place, he commanded: —

“Call a policeman, and tell him to call an ambulance. Thank you!” this last to the young man. “I suppose you and I will have to go to the hospital and the station-house?”

“Oh, that’s all right, Doctor. We’ll see it through. My name is Blake — Joe Blake. I wish I might have met you in some decenter place, but I’m glad to have met you, anyhow.”

"Let me see your hand," interrupted the doctor, whose habit of quick observation had detected something awry.

"Oh, it's nothing," answered Blake, holding out his right hand for inspection. "You see when this fracas occurred — the first one, I mean, before you came — I tried to stop murder, and incidentally to that effort I had to belt several husky criminals over the head. Naturally it hurt my hand a little."

"Yes, I see," answered Stanfield, "you've managed to break one of the metacarpals. It will give you trouble for a time, but as soon as we're through with this thing we'll go to my office and I'll set the bone."

At this point the police came in and a little later the ambulance arrived. Blake seemed to know the police officers and to be known by them. To them he said:—

"You'd better take Quirk in. The doctor says he'll sleep for a dozen or twenty hours now, and after that you'll want him. The wounded man is Bailey of our staff. He and I were here spying out the place, and Quirk got on to him. He and three others set upon us, but we thrashed them out, and the other night-hawks left the

place in anticipation of your coming. If you want them, I'll furnish names and descriptions. But it was Quirk who did the business. Why doesn't your captain close this den, anyhow?"

"Graft," answered the police officer in charge, "somebody higher up, you know. We're helpless except when something like this happens. But what's the matter with Quirk? Is he dying? What's been done to him, and who done it?"

At this moment the ambulance surgeon entered, and to him Dr. Field Stanfield said in low tones:—

"I've examined the wounded man minutely. The head wounds are not serious, I think. At any rate, there is no fracture of the skull. As he remains unconscious there may be a serious concussion of the brain, but I think not. There's a bad stab wound in the inguinal region, and the hemorrhage from that has been profuse. I've stopped it for the time, however, so that you can safely take the man to the hospital. In the meanwhile you'd better take Quirk there also—with a policeman to keep him under arrest. I've given him a steep dose of hyoscyamine—hypodermically, you understand. He may need treatment."

The young ambulance surgeon understood. Why not? He had stood high enough in his medical college examinations to take a hospital appointment. These things were as a-b-c to him. Still he wondered a little.

"How did you do it, Doctor?" he asked. "Surely in such a *mêlée* you had no time to charge your syringe?"

"I'll drop in at the hospital about noon and tell you all about it," answered Stanfield. "Just now the important thing is to get the wounded man to the hospital."

The would-be murderer, as limp as a wet rag and as helpless as a bundle of hay, and his victim, still half unconscious, were placed in the ambulance. Then the ambulance surgeon — scarcely more than a boy, but equipped with a skill that gave him confidence in himself — said to one of the police officers: —

"You will come with me in charge of Quirk as a man under arrest."

"I've no orders to that effect," responded the officer. "I'm going to take him to the station-house instead."

"No, you are not. He needs medical observation, and I'm going to take him to the hospital."

"But I've no orders," protested the policeman.

"Yes, you have — from me," answered the young doctor. "I'm a sergeant of police, you know, while I'm on the 'bus — the ambulance. Come on."

The policeman remembered and took his seat in the ambulance, carrying with him the personal cards of Dr. Field Stanfield and Joseph Blake, newspaper man, in case they should be needed.

II

A LUNATIC'S INVENTION

AS soon as the ambulance had driven away, Stanfield, standing upon the curb, said to his companion : —

“Come, your hand needs attention. Come to my office.”

It was three o'clock in the morning or after when the two entered the office, but as a newspaper man, Blake was used to late hours, while Stanfield was equally a night-owl.

So after the broken bone was set the two entered into conversation.

“I want to tell you, Doctor,” said Blake, “how I came to be in such a place as that. It is one of the very lowest dens in all this town — a haunt of thieves and murderers and the very lowest and most vicious type of women. You probably know as well as I do that when women give themselves up to vice, they are capable of extremes of degradation far greater than any that men — even the most vicious and criminal of

men — ever dream of. I have observed that to the very last and lowest extreme of degradation and crime men preserve a certain code of honor — a sort of thieves' statute of limitations, as it were. It isn't so with women. When a woman breaks away from the standards of conduct to which she has been bred, she casts all conscience to the winds. She knows absolutely no restraint except the fear of being caught; she becomes utterly depraved, as few men ever do. However, all that is an aside. I want to tell you how I came to be in Quirk's den to-night. There have been three murders committed there within the last three months, and God only knows how many fouler crimes, — for I can't help thinking there are worse things than murder, — and yet the place is licensed by the good people of New York and is kept open under their permission, purchased with a price fixed by statute. Nobody has been punished for the crimes committed there, and nobody has been arrested, until Quirk was taken in to-night. The police know all about the matter, but — well, you heard what that policeman said — there is always a man higher up who draws revenue from the criminal resort. A little while ago I set out to discover who

owned the houses rented for vicious purposes in this town. I made some startling discoveries. I found that a great, rich church corporation, representing the most exclusive social circles in the city, owned some of them. I found that others were owned by men and women of the highest prominence in society, in the church, and in philanthropic work. I made some discoveries still more startling, still more shocking." Then he proceeded to relate some of these.

"Are such things possible?" asked Stanfield, in horrified astonishment.

"Not only possible, but actual. They are known to every newspaper man, to every police official, to the tax commissioners, and to every clergyman who looks outside of his study windows for facts instead of searching books of comment for the material of his sermons. The trouble with the clergy is that they wear a sanctimonious uniform, which gives warning, wherever they go, that things must be kept 'on the quiet.' They do not meet the people on a level. They do not know what is going on about them. They segregate themselves to the detriment of their usefulness. Here and there among them is a robust *man*, but in the main they are mere priests,

as effectually shut out of knowledge of the world about them as if they were cloistered. I know one who is different — yes, two. One of them is a Catholic priest — a jolly Irishman — a good fellow who knows all there is to know about vice in high and low places. He is in constant disapproval at the bishop's palace, I believe, but his work is greatly good and for good. The other is a Unitarian clergyman whom you will be glad some day to meet. He is clean all over and clear through. He's a humorist, and makes a lot of fun, a superb toastmaster at public dinners, and altogether a man among men. I should call him Christ-like if that term were better understood than it is. I mean that, like Christ, he makes himself a man in full sympathy with the weaknesses as well as the strength of men. He is altogether a 'worldling' in so far as his knowledge of men's ways and the temptations of this life are concerned; but he is altogether a saint in so far as personal purity and a courageous insistence upon righteousness of conduct are involved. He is consulted by men and women who feel the need of counsel. He does not repel them by any priestly lack of sympathy with their temptations, but there was never any man more resolute or

more effective in rebuking their sins or pointing out to them a better way. He is as tenderly considerate of human frailty as Christ was in dealing with the woman taken in adultery; but he is as merciless as conscience itself in his insistence upon 'fruits meet for repentance.' These two are exceptions, however. There may be others like them among the clergy,—probably there are,—but they are very few. In the main, the men who preach to congregations of wealthy and well-to-do people often discreetly shut their eyes to the misdeeds of those who pass the plate or drop bills of large denomination into it."

"Your philosophy is pessimistic," answered the doctor, "and your attitude seems cynical."

"How could it be otherwise? I'm a newspaper man."

"I see. But tell me what happened when you published that list of the owners of property let for vicious purposes?"

"Oh, it was never published. You see it was represented to the city editor that such a publication would advertise the vicious resorts, and it was very earnestly impressed upon the business office that the newspaper making the exposure was likely to lose the advertising patronage of a multitude of highly reputable business firms."

"But are the newspapers controlled by considerations of that kind?"

"Not always and not altogether. But such considerations have their weight. You see it costs many, many thousands of dollars a day to publish a great newspaper, and even a Monte Cristo couldn't keep it up without a tremendous advertising revenue to support the business. It is necessary to recognize the fact that a newspaper is and must be primarily a money-getting enterprise. In earlier days a newspaper was primarily its editor's forum — his means and opportunity of impressing his convictions upon the community. The editor was the newspaper. Nowadays the newspaper is the editor. Formerly to mention the name of a newspaper was to suggest the personality of its editor. Now nobody knows who really is the editor of any great newspaper. It is a vast business enterprise, enormously costly in its conduct, and requiring an enormous income to meet the cost. Of necessity it must be controlled in a great degree from its business office, and in the very nature of the case business interests and considerations must restrain and regulate and sometimes paralyze the efforts of those upstairs to stand resolutely for the right. But pardon me,

I have wandered from my purpose, I have a piece of your property here. I picked it up after the row down at Quirk's."

With that he drew forth a broken hypodermic syringe and offered it to his companion.

"Thank you," said the other, "it's badly broken, and I don't know whether I can ever have it repaired. But I value it because of its associations — and, well, because it saved your life and mine to-night."

"Do you mind telling me all about that?" asked Blake.

"Not at all, if you've time to listen. It is now after four."

"Pardon me, I'm keeping you up."

"Not at all. Night and day are all one to me. I'm one of those unfortunates who may be said to be in the *profession* rather than in the *practice* of medicine. My sole activity is to be here in my office in the event of anybody's needing me. It is a trifle lonely sometimes sitting here and waiting, day in and day out, so I welcome and enjoy company. As for sleep, the day and night are all before me where to choose. But you have hours and duties."

"Not at all. I'm working on space. You don't

know what that means, and I needn't bother to explain, except to say that I am master of my own time, and answerable to nobody in the matter of hours. So go on and tell me, please, about that little squirt-gun."

"Well, it is the only weapon of defence I ever carry. I learned its use in that way during my term in medical college. When I had completed my third year, I was permitted to serve as a substitute for a doctor in a hospital. In that capacity I served for one summer as a student assistant in a hospital for the criminal insane. You must understand that a badly misled public sentiment, for which the newspapers are largely responsible, has prompted a good deal of ignorant and harmful legislation in restraint of common sense in the management of insane patients. The doctors in such hospitals are wise, well poised, and exceedingly humane men, and the attendants are completely subject to their orders. But silly people have somehow got the notion that these wise and humane physicians and the attendants under their control are inspired by a relentless and demoniacal animosity toward their patients, which must be restrained by statute. So it has been ordered that no doctor and no attendant

shall strike a patient under any circumstances, even though the patient is imminently threatening homicide.

“There are many other such restrictions, all of them tending seriously to cripple discipline where discipline is most imperatively necessary. The most violent patient in a hospital for the criminal insane may not be placed in a strait-jacket because there is a prevalent popular belief — founded upon novels mostly — that the strait-jacket is an instrument of torture. In fact, it is an absolutely painless means of restraint, the use of which is often necessary to prevent the violently insane from doing damage to themselves or harm to others. But the rule adopted in obedience to a wholly ignorant public sentiment forbids the strait-jacket, and as restraint of some effectual kind is sometimes absolutely indispensable, the doctors in charge of such institutions, especially those that have charge of the criminal insane, have to adopt other means.

“One of these is the administration of hyoscyamine by hypodermic injection. Within a minute or two after such an injection the patient falls helplessly asleep, and continues in that state for many hours afterward. Even after he wakes

he is apt to be nervously quiescent and not in the least disposed to give trouble. On the other hand, the medicine does him no harm, but good rather. It quiets the nerves and prevents excessive brain excitement.

“But it requires time and careful manipulation to charge a syringe properly, so that the use of hyoscyamine is not readily available as a means of self-defence in an emergency. But while I was serving in the hospital for the criminal insane, a patient, an ingenious fellow, invented and submitted to me a device for doing precisely that. He closely fitted a syringe to a vial, so that the syringe should act as stopper. By a little mechanical device he so arranged that the pulling out of the plunger of the syringe — which filled it from the vial — should release the vial's hold upon the instrument. Thus, with the vial filled with hyoscyamine and fastened in a watch pocket of the vest, the physician was fully armed. The needle of the syringe — sterilized, of course — rested in a vial of the medicine, which it hermetically sealed. By drawing up the plunger the doctor at once filled his syringe and released it for instant use. That is what I did when that burly brute came at me with his bottle and his

murderous ice-pick. I armed myself with the loaded syringe. Then, by a dive, I escaped his blow and knocked his feet from under him. In the process I stuck the syringe needle into his leg and pressed the plunger home. The drug did the rest."

"It was an insane man who invented that?"

"Yes — hopelessly insane, and at times violently homicidal. He was the first person on whom I had occasion to use his device."

"But what is the drug, Doctor? I think I never heard of it."

"You know something of chemistry?"

"No, not enough to be called knowledge; unfortunately I have been liberally educated."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I went through what is known as the regular arts course in one of our great universities. That means that I have that superficial smattering of meagre misinformation which is supposed to constitute a liberal education. I know just enough about chemistry, physics, languages, mathematics, and the like to understand — sometimes grossly to misunderstand — an explanation of facts in any one of those departments of human knowledge. I know nothing thoroughly except what I have learned since I left college."

"I quite understand you," said the young physician, "and perhaps I can explain what hyoscyamine is, sufficiently, at least, for your purposes. It is one of several drugs made from the plant *hyoscyamus* — of the deadly nightshade family. It is a metameric isomere of atropine and hyoscine — that is to say, its chemical formula is precisely identical with theirs, — $C^{17}H^{23}NO^3$. There are polymeric isomeres and metameric isomeres, you know. I'll explain that," and he did. "So far as its constituent elements are concerned, hyoscyamine is absolutely the same in composition as atropine and hyoscine, but as a drug it differs from them in certain important ways. Its effect is to put the patient to whom it is administered to sleep — to render him for many hours utterly unconscious and helpless. It stops the secretions of the mucous membrane — that is why I said that after twelve or fifteen hours of sleep Quirk would wake with the driest mouth he ever dreamed of."

"Is there no danger in the thing?"

"Yes, it is deadly, except when administered in proper quantities and in the proper way. But you need have no fear. Quirk will not die."

"No, and more's the pity. Men never die

when their death is really desirable. But if I had got in one good whack with that chair, as I tried to do, there'd have been one Quirk less in the world, and the world would have been the better for the subtraction."

"I think it would. But perhaps a jury might not have taken that view of the matter, and I can't help thinking that your living in freedom to do your work in the world is of more worth to mankind than even Quirk's death would be. He won't die, however. His career of crime will take on a new lease as soon as he serves out a term for his murderous assault on your friend Bailey. Now that I know him as your friend, I'll look in upon him at the hospital and report progress to you; for of course you'll drop in here every day for a time so that I may look after your hand. By the way, how will you do your work?"

"Oh, if worse should come to worst, I can write with my left hand so that the printers can make out the manuscript. But I shan't do that this time. There's a poor girl seeking work down at our place as a stenographer and typewriter. The city editor says she's no good, but perhaps that's because he scares her by his manner. Anyhow, she's awfully poor and she's too proud to accept

money as a gift. So this gives me an opportunity. Even if she can't take stenographic notes very fast, I'll employ her. She can write it all out in long hand if necessary, and it'll give her a little something. I noticed that her clothes are very shabby, and her shoes—well, they won't bear criticism. So while you keep me in shackles, I'll keep her busy."

"Do you know, I think you are a good fellow, Joe Blake!" said the doctor, impressively, as he took the other's uninjured left hand.

"Oh, not at all, I assure you," quickly responded Joe. "It's only that—"

"I quite understand," answered Stanfield. "It's only that—well, we'll let it go at that. Come in and let me have a look at your hand sometime during the afternoon or evening. Good night, or good morning rather, for the day has broken."

III

THE METHODS OF JOE BLAKE

WHEN Joe Blake arrived at the office of *The Universe* newspaper about one o'clock on the afternoon of that day, he turned in no "copy."

As a "star" reporter, Joe Blake was not expected to turn in "copy" until such time as he should be ready, and he was not ready yet to write anything of a news variety with respect to his investigation of the dives. He wished to print nothing on that subject till he should be ready to make a report that would "make trouble," as he phrased it.

A police reporter, working for fifteen dollars a week, had learned from the blotter of a station house that there had been a row at Quirk's dive, and that arrests had been made. So much he had reported and so much had appeared as a police item in the morning edition of *The Universe*. Joe Blake made no mention to anybody of his personal knowledge of the affray. He reserved

all that for use when the time should come for him to print a page on the subject of the vicious dives.

But Joe Blake was not minded to lose any opportunities. It was a maxim with him that "the reporter who can't sell the same piece of information more than once ought to go into the green grocery business as a delivery boy."

Accordingly, as soon as he was seated and had evasively answered the questions of his comrades concerning his sling-carried hand, he sent for Miss Gerard, the young girl in search of employment. When she came, timid and shrinking, he said to her:—

"Let us go into the library. It is quieter there, and I have a long dictation to give you."

"I'm afraid," the girl timidly began, "that I'm — the other gentlemen don't seem —"

"Oh, damn the other gentlemen!" exclaimed Joe Blake. "Pardon me, I didn't mean to swear. But the other fellows don't understand, you know; come with me."

Joe Blake was a somewhat impulsive person, full of human sympathy, and almost equally full of swear words in expression of such sympathy. He had observed this girl for several days past.

He had noted the meagreness of her attire and her rather pitiful efforts to make it appear as well as possible. He had observed her pallor and her distinctly underfed look. He had seen her shoes, which were eloquent of much walking in search of work. He had observed her extreme timidity whenever anybody set her work to do, and he had seen her many times brusquely and brutally dismissed as an incapable. He had convinced himself that she was not incapable, except in so far as her timidity and the brusquerie of those who tried to employ her made her so.

"I think she really knows how," he said to himself, "if she could have a little encouragement, and she needs help more than anybody I ever saw. I'll see what can be done, anyhow. The matter I've got to write isn't pressing, and I'll pay her for it whether she does it well or ill. What if a sister of my own were in such a strait as she is!"

So to the girl he said, as soon as the two were seated in the library:—

"Now there is no hurry about what I'm going to dictate. Take it as slowly as you please. Indeed, you will have to take it slowly, for I must think. You can take it in short hand or long hand, as you please. If you do it as fast as I

could write with my left hand, I shall be satisfied — for my right hand is out of commission, as you see. But please be patient with me if I dictate slowly.”

Then he waited till the nervous girl had got her paper arranged. Then he waited a while longer, just to make her understand that there was really no hurry. Finally he began dictating:—

“An incident — how do you spell ‘incident’?”

“I-n-c-i-d-e-n-t,” she spelled.

“All right; put a dash after the word ‘incident,’ please; an incident of extraordinary character — how do you spell ‘extraordinary’?”

The girl spelled the word, and Blake continued the dictation:—

“Another dash, please, — an incident without a parallel — how do you spell ‘parallel’?”

Again the girl spelled the word correctly.

“Without a parallel in tales told with tongue or pen — how do you spell ‘tongue’?”

“Why, ‘t-o-n-g-u-e,’ of course. Believe me, Mr. Blake, I know how to spell.”

“Yes, I see you do. I wanted to find out, you know. Now pitch all that nonsense into the waste basket, and we’ll begin the real work.”

Then slowly but with increasing rapidity as

he saw that the girl could really write her shorthand, he dictated a story for the Sunday edition of his newspaper entitled, "A Lunatic's Invention." The girl thought the story an exceedingly interesting one, admirably well told. She was astonished therefore when he said:—

"That's all right for the Sunday paper. Now we'll tell that story as it ought to be told," and proceeded to dictate to her a polished, monthly magazine romance, of which the lunatic's invention served as a sort of vertebral column, upon which he built both a love story and a romance of mystery that positively fascinated the girl. The two stories were the same in substance, yet they were utterly different. The girl, forgetting her merely mechanical function, asked:—

"But which is the true story, Mr. Blake?"

"Neither! Both!" he answered. "The bald facts appear in both. Told by themselves, they would interest nobody. Related as I have done it for the Sunday newspaper, which of course will print it with a lot of impossible but fascinatingly lurid illustrations, they make good reading matter. But they are worth a better telling than that, and I have given them a better telling in the magazine story. You see, I've

injected human interest into the otherwise merely curious facts by imagining human beings whose fates and fortunes were determined by these happenings. I have created —”

“Please don’t!” pleaded the girl. “I don’t want to know how it is done, else I should never enjoy a magazine story again. I had no idea the thing was so mechanical.”

“It is, and it isn’t,” Blake answered. “The story-writer takes his facts as he finds them, and appreciates their possibilities. He surrounds them with an atmosphere of his own creation, and invents human circumstances and human characters and human lives that they may affect in one way or another. He makes a story of them, just as the painter makes a picture with a lot of colored mud mixtures. But in all probability there was a greater story behind those facts — just as the painter saw a greater picture than he could paint — a story involving far more of human hope and despair and joy and suffering than the writer has been able to imagine. What was that lunatic inventor’s life-story, for example? So when you read the story it isn’t fair to the writer or to yourself to say, ‘That’s all made up.’ You should say instead, ‘That is probably only a faint shadow of what really happened.’”

"Thank you! I think I understand. When shall I bring you the typewritten copy?"

"About seven o'clock this evening, if that is convenient to you. But there's a little more that I want you to take — in longhand this time."

Then he proceeded to dictate a little article on isomerism in which he expounded and illustrated the chemical facts that Field Stanfield had explained to him. He showed how starch and sugar are composed of precisely the same elements in precisely the same proportions, notwithstanding their obviously different characters. He explained the difference between metameric and polymeric isomeres, and illustrated it by interesting examples. When he had finished, he turned to the girl and asked somewhat eagerly: "Does that interest you? If you saw the article in print, would you read it aloud to anybody who happened to be at hand?"

"Very certainly I should," she answered. "You have made three very interesting things out of the same materials."

"No, only two," he answered. "This last one is not mine. I shall get the man to whom it really belongs to indorse it. Then I'll publish it as his and see that he gets the pay for it. Heaven

knows he needs it. By the way, I may not be here this evening when you bring me the typewritten copy of the two stories. I might happen to be away, you know, so if you'll tell me your charge, I'll pay you now. Of course one needs ready money now and then. And please be around to-morrow. I may have more work for you. My hand is disabled, you see, and I shall have to dictate my stuff for some weeks to come. I like your way of taking it, and if you don't mind, I'll keep you pretty busy for a while."

How badly the girl needed "ready money" she did not tell him. But it was Joe Blake's pride that it never took him long to "get to windward" of things. He had seen the girl's broken shoes, and he had been quick to discover from certain indications they gave that she had *walked* down town from Harlem that day for lack of even a nickel with which to pay street-car fare. There was a moist glitter in her eyes as she said "thank you" for the money, and he did not hear her "good day" at all.

When she had gone, Blake began opening his mail. It was his rule never to read letters that might await him at the office, until after he had done his work. "You see," he used to explain,

“it diverts your attention — sets you to thinking of something else when you should be thinking of your work. Besides, when you open a letter, it may require an answer in a hurry, and so you are inveigled into writing letters when you ought to be writing copy. No letter is in a hurry for an answer till you open it. So long as you don’t know what’s in it, you’re under no obligation concerning it.”

This time one of his letters was a very urgent call from a subscription library for the return of a number of books which he had kept long overtime. It reminded him of another obligation. A good many weeks earlier he had made a contract with a publisher to collect and edit a volume of ballads of a certain specified class, with notes, etc., for inclusion in a series of dainty volumes that the publisher was bringing out. He had done some work on the task. He had made some researches and possessed himself of a good many books, each containing one or more of the ballads desired. Some of these books he had taken from the circulating library, meaning to copy what he wanted from them. Some he had borrowed from his friends. But he had been busy and had let the whole matter escape

his mind. As for the delay in returning the books to the library, that was a matter of small moment, meaning only the payment of some trifling fines. But he remembered now the more important fact that he had agreed to have the book ready for the printers within a specified time, and that that specified time was rapidly waning.

"I must get to work at this job at once, confound it," he reflected, as he awkwardly fumbled his papers with his left hand, thus reminding himself of his crippled condition. Then a thought came to him. "That girl can do all this copying for me, and she needs the employment if ever anybody needed anything. I wonder if she could help me by looking up things. Probably not. These girls are so meagrely educated. Still, she seems bright and quick and intelligent. Well, we'll see. I wonder whether she has had a square meal in a week. She's terribly hollow-eyed, and I think she'd be really pretty if she were comfortably fed and housed."

But other things engaged the reporter's attention, so that he forgot all about the girl for a time. He wanted to consult somebody at the district-attorney's office concerning his rights of going and coming in connection with his work in the dives.

He wanted to see the cashier in order to get the two or three hundred dollars he needed for expenses in prosecuting that rather costly inquiry. He felt it necessary to see the detectives at headquarters and set them upon a false scent, lest they should bunglingly interfere with his own more masterful detective work, and finally he must drop in to let Dr. Field Stanfield have a look at his hand.

While with the doctor he opened a new subject. "I was very much interested in what you told me last night about isomeres and that sort of thing, Doctor," he said, "and I've had my stenographer take down from me a report of your words as nearly as I can remember them. I wonder if you'd mind running the thing over and correcting any errors I may have made. I had the girl take it down in longhand. You see our people like that kind of thing for filling on the editorial page, but there has been so much of contemptuous comment on 'newspaper science' that they won't take it from me unless it's indorsed by a recognized scientific man."

"Well, they probably wouldn't think of me as a recognized man of science, but —"

"Oh, yes, they will. You've authority to

write 'M.D.' after your name, and that ends the game with the editors."

"Oh, very well," answered the doctor; "you've got this entirely right," and stooping over his desk he wrote his name and address across the back of the sheets.

Blake pocketed the manuscript, and said quite casually:—

"At space rates this wouldn't come to more than three dollars and fifty cents, but when I impress upon the editors the importance of your position and the difficulty I expect to encounter in getting you to tell me scientific things when I need them, they won't balk at sending you a check for a five."

"Sending me a check?" asked the doctor, "why, the article is yours, man, not mine."

"Not a little bit of it. I couldn't have written it to save my life, and even if I could, it would have gone to the waste basket if it had come from me. You are the author of the article. I am only a purveyor, and I've rendered my paper a service in securing it for use there. I'm going to draw you out on many interesting things and make you write about them, while you're tinkering up my hand. Of course, you'll never

make a newspaper man. You wouldn't know a startling piece of news if you met it face to face in the street, and with your temperament you'll never learn. But there are many things you can write about, and the writing will help you out with your rent and board bills while you're working your way into practice."

"You are certainly very generous," began the doctor, but Blake interrupted him:—

"Not at all. Not in the least. I've made two big stories out of what you told me last night. I've turned it into a page article for the Sunday paper, and I've worked it into a monthly magazine story. This little bit about isomerism impresses me as a very interesting piece of popular-science information, especially in its illustrative citations of sugar and starch, and all the rest of the familiar things. But *I* couldn't get a penny for it as my own work, so I thought you mightn't mind my turning it to account for you."

In this way began a friendship between these two young men which ripened rapidly and grew strong beyond anything of the kind that either of them had ever known. For in the life of each of them there had been circumstances that tended to forbid the making of friends.

IV

JOE BLAKE'S PREVARICATIONS

MISS GERARD, the stenographer, called and left her typewritten copy at the office of *The Universe* during the evening of that day. Blake was not there at the time, nor had he left any message; but the office boy, who received and undertook to deliver the manuscript into his hands, suggested that he might have further work for the young woman to do, and volunteered the advice that she should call upon him about one o'clock next day, on the chance of such being the case.

Even office boys are sometimes right in their conjectures, and it proved to be so in this case, for Blake did indeed want to see the young woman. He had reached the office about eleven, — an hour or so earlier than usual, — and he had thus had time to read very carefully the copy she had made for him.

"She's an expert," he said, "though she hasn't found it out as yet. Lots of young women write

as well as she does on the typewriter, and some of them much better, but this one is educated, as most of them are not, and that counts. She knows what punctuation marks are for, and she knows the English language — a rather rare thing among stenographers.”

He laughed a little as he recalled an experience. “I shall never forget the fellow I employed a year ago, and who knew nothing but sounds. When I several times used the term ‘wage earners,’ in contradistinction to wage payers, even so plain a context didn’t save him from making ‘way journers’ out of ‘wage earners.’ This one knows her English. She even knows the difference between ‘imminent’ and ‘immanent.’ By the way, I must alter that sentence. It’s above the level of the average reader’s comprehension. I put it in just to see what the girl would do with it in transcribing from shorthand notes in which the two words must be precisely the same. The girl is educated, I tell you, Joe Blake, and she can help you.”

When the young woman presented herself that day, Blake stole a glance at her shoes, as that part of her apparel had seemed to him more pressingly in need of rejuvenation than any other. He was

pleased to see that she had substituted a new pair of stout kid walking boots, such as sturdy German working girls buy for a dollar and a half, for the worn-out kid footgear of the previous day. It was raining heavily, and the girl carried a cheap umbrella — new, as he discovered by observing a tag on its top.

“Anyhow,” he reflected, “she has been spending her money sensibly and with due reference to its restricted amount. When she gets more, she’ll have sense enough to know that the purchase of more ladylike things will contribute to her success in business. At present, and with her straitened means, she does wisely to buy substantially.”

Then he said to her: —

“I want to thank you for the intelligent care you have given to this work. Believe me, it is very unusual. Ordinarily, when I give dictation in shorthand, I have to spend nearly as much time in revising and correcting as it would take to write the whole thing with my own hand. Where and how did you learn to spell ‘appellate’ with two *p*’s and two *l*’s?”

“Why, surely that is right?”

“Of course it is, but I never knew a stenographer who could be convinced of the fact. A friend

of mine, a lawyer, tells me he has to sit on that word and hatch it out, letter by letter, every time he uses it in his briefs. You must be educated?"

The girl said nothing for a time. Then, the silence seeming to oppress her, she said:—

"I have tried to equip myself for my work, Mr. Blake. At any rate, I think I know how to spell every English word of which I happen to know the meaning. Surely every stenographer should know that much!"

"Very surely most of them do not. You have had Latin, I see very clearly, and probably some Greek?"

"Yes, but why do you think so?"

"Oh, because of your spelling. Never mind about that. I've something more important to talk about."

Then he explained to her concerning the ballad collection.

"There'll be a scholarly preface to write, of course," he said, "but that will be after I've finished the work of collection and arrangement. There will be critical, explanatory, and historical notes, also, but they, too, will come later. At present what I want is to have the ballads themselves

copied with extreme care as to accuracy. There mustn't be a comma wrong, or a period misplaced, or a capital letter changed to lower case in obedience to modern usage. You understand, I want every poem copied exactly as it appears in the original, verbatim et literatim et all the rest of it."

"I quite understand the necessity of that — and I will be very, very careful."

"Thank you. Now I've got together at my rooms the books containing what I want. A few of them I've borrowed from circulating libraries; but most of them are rare books borrowed from my friends and from my friends' friends — the two are not always the same thing, you know."

"Perhaps I understand. You want me not to soil the books in using them. I'll be very careful."

"Oh, that's the least of the matter. To soil the books — though many of them are badly soiled already — would be a mishap; to *lose* any one of them would be an irreparable calamity. Some of them are absolutely priceless because of their rarity. For one little book of patriotic songs, from which I want a single piece copied, my friend who let me take it paid the price of a woman's hat, and he has since refused enough to buy a wedding present. Of course you'll take

the utmost care of the books. If you'll give me your address, I'll have them sent to you to-night."

"Oh, no!" she quickly said. "I could never take such a responsibility. I must not have those books in my possession, even for an hour."

"Oh, I'll trust you — and I'll take the responsibility."

"You don't know what the responsibility is, and — well, it is not that you must not trust me, only — but —"

The girl paused, looking at the young man intently. Finally the tears began silently trickling down her cheeks. Recovering herself she said: —

"You are so kindly, Mr. Blake, that perhaps you will understand. Your rare books would not be safe in my hands."

"Surely you don't mean —"

"No, not that. You must understand. My father — he was once an upright man — a dealer in rare books. He has fallen into bad ways — he is unfortunate, and he would recognize the market value of your books at once — please don't send them to me."

If there was any thing upon which Joe Blake prided himself more than upon any other, it was

utter callousness, utter lack of sentiment, and adamant hardness of heart. He had a theory with regard to himself. That theory was that he had schooled himself to entire insensibility; that he had eliminated sentiment from the make-up of his being; that he was as cold as a cobblestone and as hard as a patch of concrete pavement. "I'm a clam, a fish, an oyster, a water snake," he used to say. "I have no more sentiment than a back-kitchen door." He thought the simile a perfect one, forgetting that the back-kitchen door may have tender recollections of the ingoings and outcomings that have made up the romances of many human lives.

Joe Blake believed all these things regarding himself, or believed that he believed them. Those who knew him smiled.

Just now he was quick to see how sorely it afflicted the girl to explain, and he made haste to spare her.

"Of course—I understand. I quite see how it might oppress you with a sense of undue responsibility to have the custody of such books forced upon you. You are quite right, and fortunately we can easily make another arrangement. It happens that I shall be out of town to-night and

for several nights to come. Why cannot you go to my rooms and make the copies there in my absence? I can leave a list there of the things I want copied, and I'll leave word with my good old landlady to give you the run of the place. If you happen to work late, you can just as well as not stay all night every night, and the landlady will serve you a chop or some bacon and eggs and a cup of coffee for breakfast. I really wish you would take possession there for a few nights, as I am obliged to go out of town. Perhaps you have some friend, some young woman, who would keep you company."

"I know a girl who might go to read to me as I make the copies," said she, "that is if you really must be absent."

"Capital!" he replied; "go every afternoon and stay overnight. It will hurry the work and greatly oblige me. If you find the odor of stale smoke too strong in the rooms, you can open the window you know. I'll be back — let's see — four days hence — on Friday. Perhaps you can finish the copying by that time. By the way, what typewriter do you use?"

"I can write on any of them," she answered.

"But which do you prefer?"

She mentioned the name of the machine.

"That's fortunate," he said. "I rented a machine of that kind some time ago, thinking I would learn to operate it. But I'm too old a dog to learn new tricks, so the thing stands there unused and I had forgotten all about it. I suppose you'll find it very dusty, but there's a stack of towels in the bathroom. I always keep a supply, because Polydore's wife, my negro servant, you know, sometimes forgets to send the soiled ones to the laundry. You can dust the machine with the towels and use it."

What a thing is human veracity, anyhow! Here was Joe Blake lying like a financial prospectus — Joe Blake, who, as everybody knew who had ever had dealings with him, would have bitten his tongue off rather than vary so much as a hair's breadth from the exact truth in his statements with respect to any business transaction for any advantage of his own. He gave Miss Gerard the address at which he lived, assuring her that he was going out of town for the better part of a week, when in fact he was not going out of town at all. Then, to make good his fiction concerning the typewriting machine, he went at once and ordered such an instrument delivered immediately

on a month's rental. While waiting for it to come, he made out a schedule of the ballads he wanted copied, and carefully arranged all the books from which the copying was to be done. When the typewriting machine came, he observed its immaculate newness, went out into the street, and gathered a double handful of dust which, returning, he carefully sifted over it. Joe Blake was a realist in all his fictions. Then he called his negro serving woman and carefully instructed her as to the entertainment of the young woman and her companion when they should present themselves. Finally he stripped his bed to make sure that fresh sheets and pillow cases should be supplied. At the same time he removed all the soiled towels from the rack in the bathroom and spread clean ones in their stead.

Then he went to the Hoffman House and engaged a room for himself, bidding his servant Polydore take thither such clothing and toilet articles as he might need, and enjoining upon the servitor the obligation of saying nothing whatsoever to anybody regarding his whereabouts.

V

AN INTERVIEW AND ITS RESULT

DURING the next few days Joe Blake passed much of his time in the office of Dr. Field Stanfield. The two men were strangely drawn together into an intimacy which it would have puzzled either to account for. They were utterly unlike, so far at least as the externals of character and circumstance were concerned. Except that both of them habitually bathed, and both spoke the truth, there was very nearly nothing ordinarily in common between them. Both were egotists, as all strong men are, each in his own way. That is to say, each looked out upon the world from a citadel of personal self-consciousness, as all intellectual men must, and each measured the strength of others by his own. Of course each was deceived with regard to himself. Joe Blake believed himself to be a man schooled to hardness of heart, and he prided himself upon his callousness. In fact, he was as tenderly sympathetic

as the most emotional woman. Field Stanfield — basing his conviction upon a strange life experience — believed himself to be a man doomed to live always in self-centred seclusion, knowing no friends and no friendships. In point of fact, he was a man to whose nature friendships attached themselves as freely and as tenaciously as barnacles do to a timber immersed in the sea. Even during the brief acquaintance that these two had known, Joe Blake had come to hold Stanfield as a friend to whom the utmost loyalty of affection was due as a matter of right. And Mrs. Moloney, the enthusiastic and exigently cleanly Irish woman from whom Stanfield rented his office and his sleeping apartment, was as enthusiastically his champion and exalter as if she had nursed him at her own breast.

“I’ll see if the docthor can spare you a minute or two from his foine patients.” That was the reply she had given to the few strays that had rung his bell since he had been her tenant, and to each of them she had given a lecture designed to impress upon his mind the extent of his privilege in being permitted to consult so greatly wise a physician. The facts were all against her, of course; but facts were frail barriers to Mrs. Moloney’s creative

imagination, where her warm Irish heart was enlisted. "Sure, and wasn't it him," she asked, defiantly alike of grammar and contradiction, "wasn't it him that fixed up me Jimmy's bad foot beautiful in bandages the loike of which not even the dressmaker in the basement could have cut out o' muslin? An' didn't he write the foinest kind of excuse for Jimmy when he wouldn't let him go to school all on account of his foot, which he got it hurted by the carelessness of the beer-wagon driver, and thim's the carelessest drivers of all; and didn't he make the beer-wagon driver's boss of a brewer send me tin dollars to pay for Jimmy's loss of toime, which Jimmy's toime ain't of the laste value to me, seein's he's always in mischief when he's out of school, bless his heart for a darlin'? Oh, I tell yeze, he's a foine docthor, Dr. Stanfield is, as full of sinse as an Oirishman is of foight, an' if the roight ever comes by him there'll be a string of carriages before me door all the time, jist loike a foine funeral, with all the foine people a-wantin' him to docthor 'em up, which it's my belief they're always a-needin' because o' their sins."

It would have meant fame and fortune to Dr. Field Stanfield if the public round about him

could have been persuaded by Mrs. Moloney's eloquence to believe as firmly as she did in the superiority of his skill. As it was, her soundings of his praise served to bring him a patient now and then in the person of an employee in some of the buildings round about who had had the ill luck to get a finger crushed in machinery, or the misfortune to annex a colic by imprudent eating. Nevertheless, Mrs. Moloney's apostleship served to show Joe Blake how great was Field Stanfield's gift of winning confidence and making friends, in spite of a certain hauteur in his manner, and in spite of his modest shrinking from self-assertion.

After his habit, Joe Blake quickly "got to windward" of Dr. Field Stanfield's life problem. "The dear boy has skill and education and hospital experience and science, and all the rest of it," he said to himself, "and he's sure to make a go of it, if he can manage to keep soul and body together while slowly building up a practice. But he lacks money for current expenses while getting himself established. I'll advertise him all I can, and throw what practice I can into his hands. Wonder how it would do to give a lobster and milk supper down at the Press Club, and send for him to alleviate the resulting colics? Perhaps

that might unwarrantably interfere with the 'power of the press.' Anyhow, he isn't feeding as he should, so I'll have him to dinner to-night."

Accordingly Blake sought out his friend and asked him to dine with him at what was then the Metropole — where in those days a very admirably cooked dinner, as Blake said, was only slightly impaired by the barbarism of an orchestral concert. "The café is a very long one," he said to Stanfield, "and I'll take a table at the Broadway end, as far removed from the music as possible. The rattle of traffic in the street will somewhat drown the music, and with a beefsteak three inches thick, smothered in button mushrooms, we can manage to endure the noise of the fiddles — you particularly, as you'll have to carve, now that my hand is in hoc."

It was at this dinner that Joe Blake carried out certain of his cherished purposes. One of these was to put Dr. Stanfield in the way of writing little articles for the editorial page of *The Universe*, on scientific subjects of popular interest. He reckoned that with a suggestion from himself now and then, Stanfield might easily earn fifteen or twenty dollars a week — enough to cover his very modest expenses while waiting for practice to come to him.

The other of Joe Blake's purposes was deeper in its plotting. As a confirmed and habitual newspaper man, he cherished an abiding faith in the virtue of publicity and the effectiveness of advertising. He was firmly convinced that Dr. Field Stanfield needed only a good "write up" in order to secure all the practice he wanted and more. And he planned to give him that "write up."

The two met at dinner. Joe Blake had ordered the dinner, and Joe Blake knew all there was to know about dinners. There were little-neck clams, of course. Joe Blake held oysters to be an impertinence — "if anything is to come after them." There was a clear soup, not green turtle, for in Joe Blake's belief green turtle is a dinner in itself and should be treated as such. There were the usual *relèves*, — celery, pin-money pickles, stuffed olives, radishes, and the like. There was no fish course, for the reason, as Joe Blake would have explained if he had been called upon to justify his gastronomic performance, that "fish in New York are never fresh, except at the very swellest places." There was the promised beefsteak three inches or more in thickness, smothered in French button mushrooms. There were vegetables and a salad daintily mixed.

For game there were ortolans of delicious flavor. There were crackers, cheese, and coffee. There was no ice, because Joe Blake regarded the introduction of ice into a warm stomach already filled with hot food-stuffs as a barbarism — “a reminiscence,” he said, “of country courtships, in which uninstructed appetite acts as an embarrassed swain’s substitute for sentiment.”

It was during this dinner that Blake planned to carry out his purpose of advertising Stanfield into a successful practice of medicine. Carefully choosing his time, he said: —

“There’s a scare on about typhoid fever, I see. I notice that it comes about this time every year. What is the thing, anyhow? I wonder if I’ve got it? I didn’t sleep well night before last, and my coffee wasn’t hot this morning.”

Stanfield smiled. “The best answer to your question,” he said, “lies in the wreck of that beefsteak which the waiter removed before the ortolans were served. A man with your appetite may feel himself entirely free from all suspicion of inflamed Peyer’s patches.”

“But what are Peyer’s patches and what is typhoid fever, anyhow, and why should there be an epidemic of it every year?”

The instinct of exposition was strong in Field Stanfield, and he entered at once upon an explanation of the nature, the origin, the symptoms, and the characteristics of typhoid. Incidentally to his explanation, he sketched upon the back of the menu card the Peyer's patches that characterize the disease, and drew a portrait of the bacillus of that fever in the form of an elongated dot. Then, in answer to Blake's eager questions, he launched out into a sort of cyclopædic explanation of the germ theory of disease, sketching such of the bacilli as have been recognized, and explaining the ways in which they produce their several characteristic lesions in the human economy. It was an interesting lecture, and Joe Blake was in the habit of being interested in all interesting things.

That, indeed, is the fundamental equipment of the "all-round" newspaper man.

The next morning Dr. Stanfield went as usual to a little Italian restaurant near his office and ordered his customary inexpensive morning meal. While waiting for it to be served, he rather uninterestedly turned the pages of *The Universe*, which he had bought from the news-stand at the corner. The first thing that caught his eye was his own name printed in bold letters as part of a top-of-the-column head-line.



HE SKETCHED UPON THE BACK OF THE MENU CARD. — *Page 62.*

At that moment the waiter set the breakfast before him, but he gave no heed to it. He read the newspaper instead.

There was an elaborate news article there concerning typhoid fever. To his horror and disgust, Stanfield found it to be in the form of an interview with himself — an exact and really a wonderfully accurate reproduction of all that he had said the night before, including even photographic copies of the sketches he had made on the back of a menu card.

The article began by saying that in view of the prevalence of typhoid fever and the alarm created by its epidemic reappearance at that season, *The Universe* deemed it a public duty to secure and publish a scientific explanation of the nature and origin of the disease, the methods of its transmission, the means open to every family of avoiding the infection, and to give whatever else of information useful in the circumstances medical science could furnish for popular instruction and guidance. Accordingly, the article went on to say, a reporter had been commissioned to secure an interview on the subject with "that distinguished expert in febrile diseases, Dr. Field Stanfield, of number 13, West Twenty-sixth Street,

whose reputation gives special value to what he has to say on a subject that has engaged his attention in an unusual degree."

Before Stanfield had read thus far the waiter had twice called his attention to his cooling breakfast. He paid no heed to the reminder. He was horrified. He was even frightened. He felt that the publication of such an article must make an end of what hope he had cherished of securing a place for himself in his profession. It would be interpreted, he was sure, as a piece of shameless self-advertising, and he would be henceforth scorned as a quack and charlatan. Moreover, the chances were nine in ten that Joe Blake had misunderstood much of what he had said, and had put into his mouth many things that must make him seem ignorant as well as arrogant. He must read the whole article attentively to see for what atrocious blunders Blake had made him appear responsible.

But as he read he was astonished to see how accurately the reporter had remembered and presented his words. There was no error discoverable anywhere. Even the little sketches he had drawn on the back of the bill of fare were accurately reproduced and correctly explained.

"Really, Joe Blake is an artist," he thought, "but he has ruined the little prospect I ever had of getting into practice."

The waiter again called his attention to his untasted breakfast at this point, and at last he made an effort to eat, which did not result in much.

He pushed his scarcely tasted coffee from him at last, and rose from the table almost in a daze.

There was no telephone in his office. That service was a luxury which he could not yet afford. Moreover, there was a patient awaiting him, with a badly crushed foot to be dressed. The hour's work over that gave the young man time to reflect, and when at the end of that time he sat down to write Joe Blake a letter, his mood was a calm, unexcited one. His letter was not angry in its tone, as he had at first been disposed to make it, but rather a grieved complaint of the harm done to him by the indiscreet publication. It said enough to show the culprit the extent of his offending, and to suggest to him at least the terrible mischiefs it was likely to involve. Stanfield was sorry to have to write such a letter, and sorry for himself because of the calamity that made it necessary. But he was sorrier still for Joe Blake,

who must receive the missive and learn from it how grievously his generous effort to benefit his friend had miscarried. For Stanfield saw clearly what Blake's purpose had been, and he was very tenderly touched by the desire of his friend to benefit him. So, after he had explained in his letter how it was that such a publication must call down scorn and vengeance on his head, he made things as gentle as he could by telling Blake how very perfectly he understood the kindly motive of the publication, adding: "Of course you could not know the niceties of medical ethics and etiquette which you have made me seem to violate. I should have thought of all that—I should have warned you. But, of course, it never entered my head that you were interviewing me for publication. If it had, you would now know a great deal less about fever bacilli and all the rest of it than you learned from me last night."

The missive was on Blake's desk when he reached the office of *The Universe* that day a little after noon. He read it smiling, but after a moment he seemed to realize the importance of the matter, at least in so far as it affected Stanfield's state of mind.

"It can't really hurt him," he said, to reassure

himself. "In fact it will do him good, just as I meant that it should. But I mustn't let him go on imagining vain things. I wouldn't hurt his feelings for the world, poor fellow. I'll go and brace him up."

Telling the city editor that he "had a little matter outside" to attend to, he hurried, as fast as the Broadway cars would let him, to his friend's office in Twenty-sixth Street. But when he arrived there Stanfield was not at home, and though he waited for half the afternoon, Stanfield did not return. Finally Blake hunted up Mrs. Moloney and questioned her as to the time of Stanfield's probable home-coming.

"Sure," said she, "he's been called out to save somebody's loife, and a moighty foine somebody it is, too, somebody that's got plinty of money and a loife worth the savin'."

The instinct of the reporter to ask questions was always dominant in Blake's mind, and he yielded to it.

"Who is his patient?" he asked.

"Sure an' it's not the loikes o' mesilf that would be afther knowin' that. An' if I did, would I be tellin' of ye? Don't you know me position's a confidintial one, an' a great docthor like Dr.

Stanfield don't want his goin's an' comin's reported to the neighbors jist like he wor the milkman or the baker."

"He is a great doctor, then, is he?" queried Blake.

"Sure, an' he's all that. You don't rade the papers, I'm a-thinkin'. Why, they're jist full o' things about Dr. Field Stanfield. It's only this mornin' that me boy, him as goes to school an' rades beautiful, an' never stops to spell the hard words, only he's got a bad foot to-day an' the docthor's done it all up beautiful an' won't let him put it to the floor, so he must stay at home the day, — sure, as I was a-sayin' till ye, it's only this mornin' that me Jimmy was a-radin' all about what Dr. Field Stanfield has to say an' all the rist of it, a-callin' him all sorts o' foine names which I can't meself say the long words, though me boy Jimmy can say 'em beautiful an' explain 'em, too. Well, as I was a-tellin' you, for you look loike a noice gintleman that I can talk to confidential, an' so I don't mind tellin' you that when he got back from breakfast at the *hotel* this mornin' there was somebody here a-waitin' for him to mend his foot which he'd got it all smashed up in the machinery, him bein' a engineer or

somethin', and the docthor he fixed him up beautiful, an' the engineer he laid down a two-dollar bill, him bein' a man which he gits good wages an' which he says to me, says he, jist as he was a-goin' out o' the door, says he, 'Biddy, you've got a docthor in there which he knows his business an' I believe in always a-payin' of good money for a good job,' says he. An' after that there was a sort of lull in the docthor's business —"

"It's apt to be so, even in' the most active business," interjected Blake. "Little resting spells come in between, as it were."

"Jist so," said the woman, wholly without suspicion that her interlocutor was making a jest. "I've often noticed it, and it's a mercy it's so, for if it wasn't we'd all break down."

"That's very true," said Blake. "But you were going to tell me when the doctor is likely to return."

"Indade not," she answered. "How should the loikes o' me know how long a great docthor loike him is a-goin' to be kept away tendin' to his patients? I was only a-goin' to tell ye that a foine coachman-loike felly, all got up in blue clothes fittin' loike he'd been milted an' poured into his breeches, with big brass buttons a-breakin' out

all over his coat, come here wid his foiné kerridge an' silver spangled horses the day an' fetched a note for the docthor to git into the kerridge an' go an' save some foiné body's loife. Sure, an' that's all Bridget Moloney knows about his comin's or goin's. Only if you'll be sated again an' wait a little bit, maybe he'll be a-comin' in."

"Thanks, I think I mustn't wait much longer, but if I may write at his desk, I'll leave a note for him."

He scribbled, with his left hand, hurriedly:—

"Dear Stanfield: I'm sorry you feel hurt by my article, and I've been cooling my heels here for half the afternoon, in order to see you and tell you it is nonsense to feel in that way. The only compensation my patience has had is the joy of a conversation with your estimable landlady, Mrs. Moloney. From her I've learned enough about you to feel sure that the terms in which I wrote of you were fully justified. If you've any lingering doubts of your professional eminence, ask her. If you're not too busy saving lives or dressing crushed feet and hands, meet me at the Metropole again at seven this evening for dinner. I'll convince you then that the publication of my interview with you was 'Kismet' of the very best

sort. Don't fail to be there. I'll take a table in the northeast corner, at the Broadway end, as far away from the strumming musikers as possible — just as I did before. Why are people so barbarous as to hire a lot of beer-soaked noise-makers to drown rational conversation during dinner? By the way, you've a treasure in Mrs. Moloney. She believes in you as firmly as I do, and she loyally lies about the extent of your practice and the gorgeous get-up of your patients, like a theatrical press agent. I must go now. Will see you at dinner, if you get away from your patients long enough to visit your office to-day."

But while Blake wrote in this light, bantering vein, he was really very much disturbed. He had wanted to render his friend a service. He had faith in Stanfield's learning and ability, and with his own newspaper habit of mind he had firmly believed that a little advertising was all that the young physician needed in order to secure abundant prosperity in his profession. Knowing Stanfield's modesty, which he regarded as excessive, he had fully understood that it would not do to reveal his purpose in advance of its execution, for in that case he knew Stanfield would veto the plan absolutely.

But now that Stanfield's grieved note had opened his eyes to the possibility that what he had done in friendship might prove disastrous to the professional prospects of the friend he had sought to serve, Joe Blake was a very contrite young man, and a badly perplexed one as well. For, try as he would, he could think of no way in which to undo the mischief he had done. "I wish I could have typhoid fever or something else in earnest, so that I could send for him to treat me," he half muttered as he left Stanfield's office that day. "But I'm provokingly healthy. I've half a mind to go down to Quirk's place, run amuck, and send for him to mend the broken heads. But mine might be the first among them to get broken, and in that case no great good would be done."

He laughed a little at this conceit, but in spite of his disposition to take a humorous view of the situation his mind insisted upon being troubled as he hurried away.

VI

THE HARD-HEARTEDNESS OF JOE BLAKE

ON his return to the office of *The Universe* that day, Joe Blake found Miss Gerard waiting him with her copies of the ballads she had transcribed at his rooms.

A glance showed him that the work had been very carefully done, and he thanked her for the pains she had taken with it, while waiting for her to make out her trifling bill.

Presently she remembered something. Taking up the type-written sheets, she ran rapidly through them till her eye fell upon what she wanted.

"Oh, here it is!" she said. "I hope you'll pardon the impertinence, Mr. Blake, but the copy of Philip Freneau's ballads you left for me in your rooms is a comparatively recent reprint and this one of the poems is inaccurately printed, I think. There is an older and more authori-

tative version of the poems in the Lenox Library — an edition published in Freneau's lifetime — and in it the lines read a little differently. This copy," holding up the sheets, "is the modern version, copied from the volume you furnished me in your rooms. I took the liberty of going to the library and copying the earlier version also. If you don't care for it, of course —"

"In that case I shall prove myself even a worse idiot than I have been showing myself to be of late." He was thinking bitterly still of the Stanfield interview. "Of course I want the correct version. It is of the essence of this collection that it shall be accurate. But tell me, please, how did you come to make the discovery? How did you know of the earlier edition?"

The girl was as badly confused as if she had been detected in a crime, or at the least in an offence against good manners.

"Pardon me," she said at last. "You see I am a lover of old books, and really I educated myself mainly upon them. My father was a dealer, you know."

The girl said this in a shame-faced way, as if the reference involved humiliation of some sort for her; and Joe Blake — cold, emotionless,

case-hardened person that he believed himself to be — could never bear to see a woman pained or distressed in any way. So he took up the two versions of the ballad and began examining them critically, by way of diverting the conversation.

“It is curious,” he said presently, “but the newer version seems older than the other. Its use of capitals and abbreviations seems more nearly in accord with the usages of the revolutionary time than do those of the older edition, though that was undoubtedly the original. The fact seems a little puzzling.”

“Perhaps the more modern edition has been ‘antiqued,’” she suggested. “You know publishers sometimes do that — not the great, recognized publishers you know, but speculative reproducers of old books. They overdo it sometimes.”

“But I don’t understand. You see most books that we know to have been printed in the Revolutionary time or earlier used the ‘old style’ as to capitals, punctuation, etc.”

“Yes, but there were men even then who knew and used a better way. So many of them did so, in fact, that Franklin, after advancing years had made him a conservative, wrote an

elaborate letter in defence of the older way. You'll find it printed among his letters in John Bigelow's edition of his works, I think. Then again you must have read Tom Paine's 'Age of Reason' and his 'Common Sense.' You must have noticed that those books are written in the direct and forcible style of a leading newspaper editorial of to-day, though they were written in an age when nearly everybody who wrote for print seemed to think it necessary to climb up on stilts and express himself in Johnsonian English. Men did it even in their familiar letters. You must have noticed that in reading published letters of that time. In those days when a man took up a pen he thought it necessary to put on the linguistic dress coat of literary dignity instead of the negligée shirt of natural earnestness. Pardon me! I didn't mean to inflict a lecture upon you."

"I freely pardon everything except the stopping. I am greatly interested. You think, then, that in writing, the men of that time adopted an entirely artificial, literary style, under the impression that it added dignity to their utterances?"

"Yes; even Washington in his despatches speaks of 'captivating' prisoners. If he had

been talking, he would have said that he had 'caught' or 'taken' so many of the red coats. But again I beg you to pardon me. You know all these things, of course, much better than I do."

Blake sat in absolute silence for so long that the girl began to fear she had offended beyond forgiveness. He was thinking. At last he relieved the situation by saying:—

"You are a scholar, Miss Gerard. I am only the sort of dabster that people call a 'liberally educated man.' But I am known to the publishers as you are not. I have the *entrée*, as it were. The publishers regard me as a clever hack who knows how to make 'salable' stuff out of anything he undertakes to prepare for the press. They don't know you in that way at all. But you can bring to bear upon such work a nicety of scholarship to which I cannot at all pretend. Why shouldn't we work together? I can get this sort of thing to do, and you can do it."

"No, no, no," she answered quickly. "You do not understand. I have no scholarship. I never went to school. I'm not instructed. It is only that I have read a good deal — not regularly,

you know, but only in certain directions. Indeed, you must not think of that — and besides — oh, no, no, Mr. Blake. I'll copy for you; but you mustn't think of me for any better work."

To Blake's amazement the girl fell a-crying, just as if he had affronted or wounded her, and he was distressed beyond measure. He began to apologize, but that obviously was not the proper thing to do.

"You must not blame yourself," she exclaimed. "It is I who am at fault."

Instantly, and as if she were reducing a wilful child to subjection, she controlled herself.

"I am ashamed of my weakness," she said with dignity. "You shall see no more of it. I must go now."

"Wait one moment," said Blake, taking up the papers and looking them over. "There's a little more that I want you to do. There are a number of diminutive publications — song books and the like — that contain things I want. One of them is a little thing called 'Patriotic Effusions,' by Bob Short, published in 1819 by L. & F. Lockwood, New York; another is called 'The Charming Songster,' published in Philadelphia in 1827; another is 'Social Har-

mony,' published by Samuel Campbell in New York, 1795. Here is a memorandum of some others. I haven't time to look them up in the libraries. I wish you would undertake the job for me, and at the same time find out for me if there are any similar things that I don't know of. All such things will probably be grouped together in the libraries."

"But how shall I know what to copy from each of them?"

"Copy all the songs in them, please, and I'll decide afterward which to use."

"But, Mr. Blake, that will involve —"

"Yes, I know. But my time is worth more than you charge me for yours, and so it will be really cheaper for me to have you copy the whole than to spend my time studying them in the libraries. Besides, I can't smoke in the libraries, and — well, anyhow, that will be the best and cheapest way. Don't hurry with the work. If any other employment comes to you that is more pressing, don't let my work interfere. When you get all done you might send the copies, with your bill, to my rooms. I do this sort of work there and not here at the office. Good day."

He positively hurried the girl away. Perhaps

he feared she might find some other and unanswerable reason for not undertaking the employment he had invented by way of helping her.

He dreaded that especially and for reasons of his own, which he would not have stated to anybody, except perhaps to Field Stanfield. Even to him, Joe Blake said nothing on the subject; but he held himself ready, if extreme occasion should arise, to unbosom himself to Stanfield on the subject in a half-cynical and three-fourths passionate protestation. In the meanwhile he was bent upon keeping Miss Gerard — he didn't know her "front name" — profitably busy with work that might at least "keep her sensitive soul in alliance with her frail body," as he phrased the matter to himself.

"I wonder if I couldn't invent some excuse to set her copying the Bible for me?" he reflected. "That would keep her busy for a considerable time. The foreman of the *Herald* office used to keep up the supply of copy by giving out chapters from Genesis to be set up, merely by way of keeping his compositors busy and away from the Ann Street beer cellars while he was waiting for hurried and belated ship news to come in. Anyhow, I'll invent something to keep that poor

girl busy and to put bread in her mouth. Wonder if she ever has anything more substantial than bread to eat? I'll find out presently."

It should be borne in mind that Joe Blake was hard and cold, selfish and unsympathetic. He was always ready to bear personal witness to these traits of his character, and of course he was the one person who ought to know.

VII

THE STRANGE STORY OF FIELD STANFIELD

DR. FIELD STANFIELD'S position was a peculiar one. He was more absolutely alone in the world than it happens to many men or women ever to be. Indeed, it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that no man, since Ishmael, was ever so completely alone. And even Ishmael had a mother and knew who his father was, as Field Stanfield did not. Every man's hand was against Ishmael, it is true, while Field Stanfield had no enemies; but on the other hand, Ishmael's hand was against every other, and he knew who the others were, while Field Stanfield knew neither enemies nor friends.

His earliest recollection of himself was of a little English-speaking boy in the courtyard of an Egyptian palace. He remembered that there were other little boys there, but none of them seemed, as he remembered them, to have been

"in his class." Two of them were Nubians with bronze skins, which at the time he admired and envied very much. The rest were of various shades of yellow and bronze. None of them, so far as he could recall, wore clothes of any consequence, while he was toggled out in a half-English fashion which he then thought very fine indeed. He remembered that they always called him "The Little Pacha," as did the servants attending them. He learned from them enough of Arabic, or whatever else their dialect was called, to make their playing together possible, for none of them would learn any English except that one quarrelsome little bully had somewhere picked up a limited vocabulary of English profanity, and was fond of airing his erudition. One day he applied his epithets to the little pacha, whereupon that not very patient young person gave the bully such a thrashing that he completely renounced his English scholarship, such as it was, and thereafter rigidly confined his utterance to his native tongue.

Beyond this incident and a few other vague recollections, Field Stanfield could remember nothing of his life in Egypt, or even of his own passing out of that life.

The next thing he remembered concerning himself was that he was living somewhere in Normandy — in a little French village — under charge of a tutor, — an American named Bellamy. The two lived together in a little house in the middle of the town, attended by only one servant, a negro woman whom Bellamy had brought from America to look after the domestic affairs of the pair. The tutor seemed then and afterward to be abundantly supplied with money with which to carry on the boy's education, to provide for all his wants, and even to gratify all his whims and fancies. As he looked back upon that time, Field Stanfield saw clearly that the money had been furnished from some hidden source, from which came also instructions — both general and particular — as to the methods of the lad's education. Every change of residence, every detail of life, was manifestly prescribed by an authority of which the boy knew nothing and the tutor not much more.

Mr. Bellamy was always kind to the boy, in an entirely negative and colorless way. He never in all those years spoke a harsh word to him or uttered a soft word in a harsh tone. More affirmatively, in all those years he never failed

to think and do the kindly thing, whatever it might be. But he did all this, as Field Stanfield once put the matter, "precisely as a post-office clerk deals out fifty stamps to you — no more, no less — in return for the dollar you have handed in at the window." There was no heart in it, and the boy used often to rebel in spirit against the cold exactitude of the justice dealt out to him. He would have welcomed any injustice short of a flogging — for if that had been inflicted upon him he would very certainly have done murder in revenge — if only the injustice had been excused by passion or heat, or even warmth of any kind.

In brief, Bellamy won the boy's respect and held it securely to the last. His scholarship and his really admirable gift of teaching commanded the youth's admiration, after he grew old enough to appreciate such things. But from beginning to end he made no more appeal to the affectionate side of the boy than any perfectly acting piece of machinery might have done. There was nothing in the man's nature that could respond to any yearning for affection. The boy regarded him precisely as he regarded his school books, his pencils, and the chalk with which he

wrought out problems on the blackboard. The tutor was a necessary, and in his way an excellent, adjunctive aid to education, precisely as the school books, the pencils, and the chalk crayons were. And in Field Stanfield's regard the tutor held no higher place than did those other implements of instruction.

In his maturer years Stanfield came to understand clearly what had been a blind riddle to his boyish mind. He understood that the purpose of this residence in France was that he should acquire familiarity with the French tongue in the natural way. To that end the tutor Bellamy converted the garden around his house into a playground, providing there every appliance of play that any child — male or female — could desire. Then he invited all the boys and girls of the village to come there every day for their playing. When it rained, he threw the house itself open to them, with their tops and marbles and all the rest of it. Stanfield remembered that even balls were in nowise forbidden, and in his maturer wisdom he reckoned that the bills for broken windows, picture glass, and the like must have run into the scores of francs weekly.

There were work benches, also, with their

appropriate tools. There were jig-saws, paints, and modelling clay — everything, in short, that young hearts and minds and bodies could desire. In fine weather an old French gardener taught the children how to make and plant and care for flower beds. The sea lay at no great distance, and, under Bellamy's guidance, but without any unnecessary interference on his part, the whole company of wild, free-hearted children went fishing, bathing, and joyfully idling at sweet will. Then, too, Bellamy hired boats and a waterman, who taught Stanfield and his companions to swim, to row, and to manage a sail-boat.

In the meanwhile the tutor was giving the boy lessons in arithmetic, English grammar, geography, history, and the like, with a little rudimentary Latin and Greek, which he treated rather as pastimes than as required task work. In the evening the boy amused himself by reading the pretty little French story-books which his tutor bought for him in lavish abundance. Thus unconsciously he acquired a skilful acquaintance with the French language within a comparatively brief time.

Then suddenly there came a change. Bellamy, with his pupil, removed to Germany, and after

a year there to Italy. In those countries, and later in Spain, somewhat different arrangements were made because of the boy's increasing age; but the educational principle was the same. The boy learned the languages by close and constant contact with young people of his own age to whom those languages were mother tongues. In the meantime, his tutor was pressing the more orderly work of education with vigor and persistence, particularly in the Latin, Greek, and mathematics. The boy was easily induced to do a good deal of literary and historical reading, also, the books and subjects being chiefly American.

The teacher was not merely a learned man. He had a rare genius for teaching, and especially a gift of awakening interest and curiosity.

Under such instruction the bright boy advanced so rapidly in his formal studies that at sixteen he might easily have entered any American college as a junior or even as a senior.

During all these years, and for a time afterward, the boy was living, as it were, under the care of a Special Providence, and it was not altogether good for him that he should do so. His attention was first drawn to the matter one day when the tutor suddenly announced to him that they were

to remove at once from Spain, where they were then living, to England. The boy knew that the tutor had not expected this change. For the first time young Stanfield understood that in all that he did Bellamy was acting under direction of some authority which gave its orders without warning or consultation, and exacted unquestioning obedience. It was obvious to the boy that Bellamy's instructions came to him quite unexpectedly at times, and always without explanation of any kind — that the authority which directed everything was unknown even to the tutor except in its manifestations.

Having once thought about the matter, the alert-minded boy continued to think about it, to question, to speculate, to observe. He recalled many little things that threw light upon the situation when he remembered them, though at the time of their occurrence they had made no impression upon his mind. On one occasion, he remembered, he had expressed a vague desire to live by the sea and to have a boat of his own that he might sail. The tutor had made no response to the suggestion and it had soon passed from the boy's own mind. But a few weeks later Bellamy suddenly removed from the inland town where the two were living

and took up his residence by the sea, where he purchased a suitable boat and gave the lad permission to sail as much as he liked, in company with a sailor whom he had hired to take care of the little yacht. As Stanfield recalled this and other incidents of a like kind, he little by little worked out a theory of his own as to the matter. Bellamy, he saw clearly, was not a man of wealth, but a tutor employed, at a liberal salary, and charged with the duty of educating and caring for this boy under explicit instructions, given from time to time by the unseen power that furnished the means in lavish abundance when required, but only as each occasion called for expenditure. Clearly the tutor had little left to his discretion. It was his duty to report upon the boy's progress in education, and to mention any wish that he might express. In due time the unseen authority directed him to gratify the wish.

The more clearly Stanfield understood the situation, the more his soul revolted against it. He felt that his position was unnatural, abnormal. He felt that he was not free, as other boys are. The very consciousness that every want of his was supplied, every desire gratified, — whether it was reasonable or the reverse, — became irri-

tating to his mind. He wanted to struggle for something, to buffet for it. Why was everything done for him? Who did it? And above all, why did those who so carefully looked after his welfare hide themselves from his acquaintance? Were they his parents? If so, why did they not summon him to live with them and give him an opportunity to justify their love? Why was he shut out of their lives and condemned to a loneliness that more and more' oppressed him as he more and more fully realized its extent?

Worst of all was the feeling that his condition was utterly unlike that of other boys — that he was to them an object of wonder and curiosity. They envied him, he very well knew, because every want of his was lavishly met, without even the necessity of pleading for his desires. But in his turn he envied them their more normal condition as conscious dependents upon affection and human sympathy for the gratification of their desires. He greatly envied one English boy who told him how his father — whom he irreverently called "the governor" — had severely caned him for some boyish misdemeanor. He envied that boy the possession of a father in sufficiently close relations to him to care for his misdemeanors and

to chastise them. Field Stanfield had never received even a rebuke from any human being, and it filled his soul with a sense of hopeless abandonment and isolation to know that in all the world there seemed to be nobody who cared enough for him even to grow angry with him and punish him for his faults.

The boy brooded over these things unwholesomely, and grew more and more discontented as the days went on. But he said nothing until the subject was brought under discussion by his tutor. Mr. Bellamy called his pupil one day and said to him: "You are sixteen years old, Field. This is your birthday, and those who have commissioned me to superintend your education have instructed me to tell you so. I have represented to them that you are entitled to know your birthday, your age, and your nationality, and they have bidden me tell you that much. You are a native American, of native-American parentage on both sides and for several generations back. Indeed, I am informed that you come of rather old colonial stock."

"Who are the people who have directed you to tell me this much?" the boy asked.

"I do not know," Bellamy answered, and with

that he turned away, leaving his pupil puzzled and wondering, and giving him no opportunity to ask how it was that he did not know from whom he received instructions and money, and all the rest of it. Later the young man brought the matter forward again by saying to him:—

“I wish I could know somewhat more about myself.”

“I’m sorry I cannot tell you more,” the tutor answered in his cold, calm way. Then Field asked him, “Do you mean that you really cannot tell me, or that you are forbidden to do so?”

“Both,” he answered.

“It seems a hardship,” the boy said after a while, “that I cannot know who my father and mother are, or even that they are reputable people. It shames and humiliates me. It suggests that I am in some way ill born, that my parents have done something so vile that the very knowledge of it must be mercifully kept from me.”

“I understand your feeling,” answered the tutor. “I would tell you more if I could, but I cannot. I do not know who your father is or your mother, or whether either of them is living. In fact, I know absolutely nothing about you, and I have never known anything. I am employed

to superintend your education. My commission comes from a firm of lawyers in New York. My salary comes to me through them — also all the money I spend for your maintenance. From them, also, come all my instructions. I report to them regularly as to your work, your progress, and all the rest of it. After a time — not immediately — come instructions, and I obey them. I suppose, of course, that the lawyers are mere agents, as I am, — that they receive their instructions and transmit them. That is all that I know about it.”

It was a good many months after that birthday conversation when the tutor one day bade the young man pack his books and other belongings at a single day’s notice for a voyage to America. The next day the two, with the negro woman servant, boarded a steamer at Liverpool, where their accommodations, the best there were on the ship, had been previously secured by the unseen agency that so completely dominated Field Stanfield’s life as to fill him with a sense of oppression.

One day at sea the youth and his tutor sat together on deck. After a period of silence, Stanfield asked: —

"Are you at liberty to tell me where we are to live after we land in America?"

"We are to go to the Gilsey House when we land. I expect instructions to await me there. I have had only the order to sail, and upon landing, to go to the Gilsey House, where a suite of rooms is reserved for us."

The boy sat moodily scanning the sea for a time. The tutor, who had begun rather to feel than to understand his pupil's mood, sat also silent, for the reason that there seemed to be nothing for him to say.

At last, with a note of bitterness that he had never before put into his utterance, Field Stanfield said:—

"I am getting tired of this. I may presently decide to run away."

The tutor finished peeling an orange, walked to the taffrail, and threw the orange peel overboard before replying. It was often thus between these two. There was no "short circuit" of sympathy between them. Each respectfully listened to whatever the other might say, and each responded at his leisure, or not at all, as the circumstances or the personal mood might suggest. After he had again seated himself in his deck

chair and had readjusted his steamer rug, the tutor broke silence.

"Would you mind telling me," he asked, "from *what* you think of running away?"

"You know as well' as I do," answered the youth. "Or you would know if you had any drop of warm blood in your veins. As it is —"

The young man lapsed into silence, and his tutor made no reply whatever. After a while Stanfield said: —

"I beg your pardon for that. I ought not to have said it. But — well, you don't understand me and you can't."

"I quite agree with you that you ought not to have said what you did. But it doesn't matter. As for the rest, perhaps I understand you better than you imagine. However, that, too, is a matter of no consequence. From *what* are you impelled to run away?"

"Why, from this intolerable subjection to an inscrutable Special Providence — this control by an authority that I know nothing about," answered the youth, impatiently.

"It is a kindly, beneficent authority, is it not?" asked the teacher.

"I don't know," the boy answered, with irri-

tation in his tone. "I don't know whether to reckon it kindly and beneficent, or the reverse. It provides abundantly for all my wants. It has given me every conceivable opportunity for education except the supreme one of struggle. But it has robbed me of personal liberty. It provides softly cushioned chairs for me to sit in, but it leaves me no liberty to sit on a bench or on the ground if I choose. It gives me freedom, but not liberty. I am weary of being treated as a child — a babe in arms for whom everything is done, and who is permitted to do nothing whatever for himself."

"I think I understand," Bellamy replied. "I don't know what will happen after we land in New York, but I strongly advise you to wait and see. If you were a young man of merely ordinary capacity, I should think it no mistake on your part to break away at your present age and see what you could do for yourself. But you have quite uncommon abilities, and they should have all of opportunity that education can give them. I very strongly urge you to wait with what patience you can till you shall have completed your education and mastered some profession before you break away from the kindly authority that now

governs your life and take your career into your own hands. Beyond the giving of that advice, I do not feel that I have authority to interfere even to the extent of saying a word."

At that moment a deck steward passed and the boy hailed him:—

"Bring us a bottle of champagne and some biscuit," he ordered.

When the wine was brought and opened, the boy took the bottle, went to the rail, and emptied the champagne into the sea.

"That tells you the story," he said, "or it ought to. I never drink wine and neither do you. Yet I am perfectly free to order this bottle of it, and to pour it overboard, knowing that, through you, the beneficent authority that governs my life will pay for it and make no objection to my wastefulness. But don't you see that that isn't liberty? I am not even free to pay for the wine that I waste. I am not even permitted to be accountable for my own acts, however foolish they may be. I am denied all sense of personal responsibility — all — ah, bah! it ought to be plain enough. I am not free. I am not a human being. I am a puppet, a toy, a tenderly cared-for pet."

In his exasperation and his inability adequately to express the thought that was torturing his mind, the youth pushed his steamer rug aside and strode away down the deck, to be seen no more till dinner time.

VIII

THE STRANGE STORY OF FIELD STANFIELD

(Continued)

PERHAPS the tutor understood his pupil's mood. It is certain that a radical change was presently wrought in the young man's life conditions.

After the two had spent about a fortnight in New York, the tutor said to the youth one day:—

“We are to spend a year in travel in our own country now. It is left to you to decide upon our itinerary, to determine our routes, the length of our stay in each place, the choice of hotels, and all the rest of it. Suppose you devote a day or two to the task of marking out our journey. Of course your schedule will be subject to change whenever you find change necessary or desirable, but it will be well to have a scheme marked out for our general guidance.”

This announcement almost stunned the youth. For the first time in his life full liberty of choice

was his, so far at least as details were concerned. But his first joy in this initiative was quickly modified by the reflection that even now his life was directed by the Special Providence that had dominated it from the beginning. He was free to make his own itinerary; but the travelling itself was ordered for him just as everything else in his life had been. All the expenses of the journey would be paid by his unseen and unknown benefactor. From its beginning to its end he would be under the perfect protection of his Special Providence, and the thought of that marred his pleasure in his new-found liberty.

Still, there was liberty, and he enjoyed it. He, and no other, was to choose the route and determine the duration of his stay at every point in the journey. So greatly did he relish this privilege of personal initiative — restricted as it was — that he studied timetables and hotel advertisements with a delight that no other literature had ever given him. He several times altered the programme quite wantonly, and solely for the gratification of his mind by the exercise of a liberty of choice such as he had never known before.

When the journey began, the tutor Bellamy

assumed a totally new attitude toward his pupil. His was no longer the directing mind. He was simply a friend accompanying the youth as his guest. The supplies of money came through him still, but he exercised no authority over expenditures. He simply passed the funds over to the boy, leaving him to make all payments and determine all expenditures. By way of exercising his liberty and testing it, Stanfield would sometimes spend money with reckless lavishness. At other times he would take the cheapest rooms in the most undesirable hotel of a town. On one occasion he and his tutor made a journey, covering two nights and a day, without taking any sleeping-car berths. At another time he deliberately wasted a week in a wretchedly uninteresting little town. But never once did Bellamy make any sign or suggestion, or express the slightest wish to have matters differently managed.

Field Stanfield was free. He enjoyed the freedom, but little by little the truth forced itself upon him that, after all, it was not liberty alone that his nature craved, but affection and a more intimate relation with his fellow-creatures.

When this year of wandering at last drew near its end, the tutor and his pupil sat one day on the

Sutro bluff at San Francisco, watching the seals playing out upon the rocks in the sea.

"We've just a month more of wandering, Field," said the tutor. "After that, it is desired that you shall enter a university. What university shall it be?"

"Am I free to choose?" asked the boy.

"Absolutely — except that it is to be some American institution."

"What would you advise, Mr. Bellamy? I will be guided by your judgment."

"I must not advise," responded the other. "You are to choose for yourself. You have already mastered practically all the work required for your bachelor's degree, so that you will remain an undergraduate for only one year, and even during that year you will have abundant time to devote to other than the required studies. I suppose, therefore, that you will wish to put in your time in some sort of special preparation for the study of whatever profession you decide to follow, and of course you can do that better in some institutions than in others."

"Am I free, then, to choose my profession for myself?"

"Absolutely."

"Very well. I will study medicine. In what university can I most profitably do the preparatory work?"

"That is for you to decide. I have secured the catalogues and other publications of every American university of importance, and when we go back to the hotel to-day I will place them all in your hands. With the aid of the information they will give you, you'll be able to decide which of them offers you the best opportunities."

"And you will not advise me?"

"I must not. I am forbidden even to express approval or disapproval of your choice after you shall have made it."

"That seems a little unkind," said the boy.

"It is liberty — the thing you wanted," answered the tutor, "and, after all, it is best. Every man must learn to direct his own life for himself, and you have excellent judgment."

For days the boy brooded over this matter. Never in his life had the sense of his isolation and loneliness so oppressed him. His liberty of choice was absolute, but it was strangely unsatisfying. It was liberty by exclusion. "I am alone in the world," he reflected, "more utterly alone than I ever knew any other human being to be. There

is somebody somewhere who provides abundantly, even lavishly, for my material wants, but from what motive? I do not know and am not permitted even to inquire. So far as I know I have no father, no mother, no people, no friends even — nothing except an inscrutable Providence that holds itself so far aloof that even its chosen minister gives me neither counsel nor sympathy when those are my greatest needs.”

At last Field Stanfield was beginning to understand himself. He saw clearly now that it was not liberty that he had so passionately wanted — not liberty, but human sympathy, affection, friendship.

Perhaps the college life would give him these things, he thought, and he looked forward to that life with eager expectation. In that he was disappointed. Entering his class as a senior when for the men in that class the college life was well-nigh done, he might as well not have entered it at all, so far as the forming of friendships was concerned. The other members of his class had already shared for three years each other's joys, sorrows, ambitions, successes, and defeats. Their lives were closely knitted together, and Field Stanfield stood among them, but not

of them. They regarded him as a good fellow, a gentleman, and all the rest of it, but essentially a stranger. Such association as he had with them served rather to emphasize than to relieve his feeling of isolation, and as there was really very little for him to do in the way of regular class work, he shrank into the laboratories and devoted himself to the study of chemistry and biology, becoming more and more a recluse.

All this while Bellamy continued to live with him, but he more and more took himself out of Field Stanfield's life and Field Stanfield's affairs. He no longer supervised the young man's work. He no longer even asked concerning its progress. He still received remittances from time to time and passed the money over to Stanfield, making absolutely no inquiry as to the uses to which it was put.

When the university year was done, Bellamy one day said:—

“I am going away, Field. You and I may not meet again. I am directed to tell you that during your course as a student of medicine a sufficient sum of money for your support will come to you in quarterly remittances; I think that is all I have to say.”

And without a word of good-by or good wishes the tutor turned back to the book he had been reading, and Field Stanfield, with an intense bitterness in his heart, withdrew from the room. When he returned later to pack his belongings, Bellamy was gone.

For four years after that there came to the young man every quarter a formal notice from a bank in New York, telling him that a certain sum of money had been deposited there to his credit, and that he was at liberty to draw upon the account at will. The sum was not the same in all cases. It seemed to increase or diminish in a pretty exact proportion to his need. When he changed quarters, thus assuming a greater living expense than before, the deposit made to his credit was increased accordingly. Manifestly, the person who stood in the relation of Special Providence to Field Stanfield kept himself very perfectly informed with respect to Field Stanfield's needs.

At last Stanfield took his degree as a Doctor of Medicine and a good hospital appointment. This appointment carried with it board and lodging, and the sum deposited quarterly to the young man's credit underwent a corresponding reduction.

A year and a half later, when his period of hos-

pital service was over, there came a formal notification from the bank to the following effect:—

“We are directed to notify Dr. Field Stanfield that if he desires to complete his medical education by a year or two years of study in the schools and hospitals of Europe, a sufficient sum to cover the expense of such study will be deposited quarterly to his credit in this bank.”

Stanfield was still very young at that time — too young to hope for success in private practice. Moreover, he was enormously ambitious to make his equipment of scientific learning as complete as possible. He therefore embraced this opportunity and went abroad to study.

IX

A PARISIAN ROMANCE

THEN it was that romance first intruded itself into Field Stanfield's life. He was in Paris, studying in the schools and hospitals there, and doing some work of investigation in the laboratory of M. Pasteur, when by chance he became acquainted with an American woman who was in Paris studying music. This was Carolyn Blake — a woman exquisitely beautiful and one possessed of a strange, indefinable fascination which strongly appealed to Stanfield. Apparently these peculiarities of her personality had become known to her, and she had erected around herself defensive works of a more than usually elaborate sort.

She lived in a simply furnished apartment, in the Rue Bonaparte, on the artistic side of the Seine, and not far from the Pont Neuf. She kept herself "duennaed almost to death," as Field Stanfield impatiently thought. She had not only

a married woman living with her, but the married woman's elderly husband also — one of those clever men in art who can copy so like that the painter of the original could not tell the difference, but who could not paint a picture of any value on his own account to save his life.

With the impetuosity of youth, Field Stanfield fell madly in love with the young woman the moment he saw her, and his passion grew rapidly with what it fed on. It was not only the woman's beauty and the willowy grace of her movements that attracted him, though these were fascinating. Above and beyond those charms was a certain intellectual sympathy which drew the two together.

On the woman's part there was a like sense of attraction. Field Stanfield's intellectuality soon dominated her own, and, as she said, educated it. It rejoiced her to hear him talk. Whatever he said seemed to take hold upon her in a way that promptly negatived her own previous thinking. His presence pleased her, his conversation was to her a delight and an inspiration. His counsel she accepted as a command.

Nevertheless, she rigidly maintained a certain invisible, but none the less impassable, barrier between herself and him. She went nowhither

with him except in company with her artist friend and his wife. She gave him no opportunity to be alone with her for even a moment.

Field Stanfield knew that he loved Carolyn Blake, and he believed that she loved him. Under ordinary circumstances the outcome of such a situation would have been simple enough. For, in spite of all the duennas that may surround a woman, the lover who is in earnest finds a way in which to reveal his love and to ask for love in return. And in the case of an honest love, duennas are apt to be purblind.

But the circumstances in this case were not ordinary. Field Stanfield had a quarterly supply of money amply sufficient to provide for all his needs — even for those that were extravagant. He was able to maintain himself in a “grand” apartment on the more expensive side of that river which divides Paris into two cities, — the one devoted to living and the other to thinking. He lived expensively in the Rue de Courcelles, not many minutes’ walk from the Champs Élysées and the Arc de Triomphe. He could afford to send dainty boxes of flowers every day to Carolyn Blake in her dingy apartment over an optical instrument maker’s shop in the Rue Bonaparte.

But upon reflection he saw clearly that he had no secure resources that might justify him in asking any woman to become his wife. His quarterly remittance had been promised him only during the time of his post-graduate studies in Europe. It might cease the moment that period of study should come to an end. He saw himself dependent upon a whim, the possessor of which was wholly unknown to him. The same uncertain whimsicality that had increased and diminished his supply of financial means, according to his need at different times, might at any moment cut off the supply altogether.

Field Stanfield was possessed of two excellent qualities, — courage and common sense. His common sense taught him that he must return to America forthwith and seek to establish himself in a practice of his own which should free him from dependence upon the uncertain whim of an unknown personage. His courage nerved him to set about the business at once. But first he must come to an understanding with Carolyn. To that end he sent her a letter, late as it was in the evening. In it he wrote:—

“I am returning to America almost immediately. You cannot have failed to understand my

feeling toward you ; but you have permitted me no opportunity to declare my love, or to explain myself otherwise. There are peculiar circumstances in my life that strangely involve me and embarrass my acts. I must explain these to you. Then I must go to America at once and make an effort to rid myself of these embarrassments. But first I must tell you all and learn from your own lips that I have not misunderstood your feeling toward me. It is too late for me to call upon you to-night, though not too late to send you this letter by a commissionaire. Alas ! as you told me to-day, you are going to St. Cloud to-morrow in company with many people, and in the evening you must play at a house in the Faubourg St. Germain. I must wait, therefore, until Monday. Then I shall go to you and you must give me a private hearing. If it be necessary, you may say to your friends, the artist and his wife, that I come by appointment to declare my love. Surely you can then bid them absent themselves while I tell you all that I have to tell. Good night and pleasant dreams to you. I shall call on Monday at two o'clock. It is long to wait, but circumstances compel me to patience."

There remained the Sunday to be occupied in

impatient waiting, and by way of getting through the dragging hours Stanfield fled to Versailles. It was a perfect day, and it was that Sunday in the month appointed for the fountains in the palace gardens to play. Stanfield started without his breakfast, and upon leaving the train at Versailles halted in the market to buy grapes and green almonds. With these in possession he went on and chose a seat under the great trees of the avenue, in front of a little cabaret, from which he ordered a pot of coffee, a roll, and some butter.

After his breakfast in the open he walked on to the palace and devoted some hours to a renewed study of that series of paintings in which nearly all the glories of French history are graphically set forth in wonder-working succession.

At last came the time for the fountains to be set playing, and he passed from the palace to that succession of terraced gardens which reflects all that is best in the art-inspiration of France, — an expression of the French love of beauty, created by the tireless labor of hundreds of years.

As he was passing from one of the terraces to a lower one, a sudden shift of the wind blew the water of one of the fountains aside, drenching the gayly clad throng of sight-seers as a sudden down-

pour of rain might have done. There was an instinctive recoil on the part of the crowd, so that many persons were thrown to the ground. Among these was Field Stanfield, who, in falling, struck the back of his head against the corner of a granite terrace wall. Half a minute later he was picked up insensible and carried to a hospital.

Several hours passed before he fully regained consciousness. When he did so, he learned that he had sustained a serious but probably not dangerous wound on the back of his head, and that his right shoulder had been dislocated in his fall. The wound had been dressed and the dislocation reduced during the period of his unconsciousness, and he now found himself very considerably imprisoned in bandages. The surgeon who had attended to his hurts recognized him as a professional brother whom he had several times met at the clinics, and from him Stanfield soon learned the extent of his own injuries. The doctor assured him that with rest and quiet he would be able to return to his apartments in Paris within a few days, but when Stanfield insisted that he must return to Paris not later than noon on Monday, the surgeon peremptorily forbade.

"You must remain quiet for at least twenty-

four hours after that, Doctor," he said, "on account of the wound in the head."

Field Stanfield had served too long in French hospitals not to know the peremptoriness of their discipline, buttressed as it is by legal enactments of many kinds. He knew that he could no more leave his hospital couch without permission than any prisoner under sentence can quit his jail without a legal discharge.

His first thought was to send a letter to Carolyn, telling her of his mishap. But that lame and tightly bandaged right shoulder forbade him to write, and he shrank from the thought of having anybody else write to Carolyn in his stead. There was no telephone, he knew, in the house in which she lodged. But at least a telegram was possible. He hired one of the attendants to write it, and to have it sent early on Monday morning. It said simply: "Have had accident. Am in hospital. Nothing serious except detention. Will see you soon as released."

Late in the afternoon of Monday there came to him from the telegraph office a notice saying that the despatch had not been delivered, "reason being that the person to whom it is addressed is not found at address given."

Ordinarily Field Stanfield was a person accustomed to meet all happenings with a calm mind. But on this occasion he fell into a condition of uneasiness and anxiety that presently brought on fever, and it was not until Wednesday morning that the surgeons permitted him to take a cab for Paris.

It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon when his voiture reached the Pont Neuf, but unmindful of times and seasons, he ordered the coachman to drive at once to Carolyn's apartment.

He found the place deserted. The artist and his wife and Carolyn — all were gone. He questioned the concierge eagerly, almost angrily — but all to no purpose. Except for a shrug of the shoulders, the only answer that functionary could give to his questions was that monsieur, madame, and mademoiselle had given up the residence and gone away from Paris — “to Vienna, perhaps,” he said, “or to Florence, or who knows.”

There was no note, no message of any kind. Perhaps an explanation had been sent to Stanfield's apartments by the post. He would go at once and see. He gave the driver of his voiture an extra franc as hurry money, and drove to his rooms in the Rue de Courcelles. There was no letter there, no message — nothing.

The young man felt as if he had been suddenly and without provocation slapped in the face. But as he thought over the matter and slowly calmed his spirit, he saw clearly that after all this was best. This love of his for Carolyn was a madness, under the circumstances of his life. He had had no right to ask her to plight her troth with him until such time as he should be able at once to make her his wife. And he remembered, as he thought the matter over, that the only suggestion he had made to her of his love was accompanied by the statement that he could not offer her marriage as yet — the explanation that he must first go to America and establish himself in the practice of his profession. His mood of mind was a tenderly considerate one, and it seemed to him that this circumstance sufficiently accounted for and excused the seeming affront to him implied in her abrupt departure and her failure to leave any message of explanation.

The matter seemed simple enough as he reflected upon it. His letter had discovered to her his attitude of mind, and for reasons of her own she had decided to put an end to their relations. Perhaps there was something in her own situation, or her life conditions, — concerning

which he knew nothing, — as there certainly was in his own, — to render this love unwise and inopportune. He did not know. He could not tell. But after a night and a day of perturbation of spirit, his common sense asserted itself as the dominant spirit of his life. It showed him plainly that what had happened was altogether for the best, and that there had been neither cruelty nor injustice in the woman's conduct.

He hastily withdrew such engagements as he had. He arranged for the cancellation of his apartment lease and took ship at Havre for New York, full of a purpose to take ambition for his sole passion, to establish himself in his profession, and to free himself once for all from his life-long condition of dependence upon an unseen and inscrutable benevolence. Then he would seek out the woman he loved and claim her for his own.

He had been in New York less than twenty-four hours when there came to him from the bank a formal note saying: —

“We are instructed to notify you that the quarterly deposits hitherto made to your credit will cease at the end of this quarter. We enclose a statement of account, showing a balance to your credit, against which you are, of course, free to draw at will.”

Field Stanfield laughed as he flung the missive into a waste-paper basket.

"It seems," he said to himself, "that my Special Providence not only meets all my desires, but anticipates them. I had thought to free myself from this intolerable dependence, and I am freed from it without any agency of my own. It is better so. The little balance I have in bank will enable me to rent an office and a sleeping room for a month or two, and to take my meals at the New York equivalent of a Duval. I wonder if the unseen benefactor who has so long managed my affairs for me inquired concerning that balance, and reckoned up what a prudent young doctor might do with it. At any rate, here endeth the order of Special Providence in the life of Field Stanfield. Henceforth I will stand upon my own legs."

Thus it came about that, while still a young man, Field Stanfield rented an office and a sleeping room from Mrs. Moloney, and offered his services as physician to a public that was obviously not waiting for those services with any eagerness of expectancy. This was the situation when accident brought him to Joe Blake's acquaintance and won for him, in Blake, the first real friend he had ever known.

X

MISS IMBODEN

MRS. MOLONEY'S creative imagination had somewhat exercised itself in her account to Joe Blake of Dr. Stanfield's summons on that morning when Blake's publication threatened disaster to Stanfield's prospects in life. The gorgeously liveried footman described by her had no other existence than in the person of an underfed A.D.T. messenger boy, whose single row of brass buttons Mrs. Moloney had multiplied into "buttons breaking out all over him." The carriage, with its silver-bedecked horses and harness, was, in fact, nothing more than a coupé cab, drawn by a single and manifestly tuberculous horse. Nevertheless, Mrs. Moloney's prophetic interpretation of the incident was in nowise exaggerated. That summons proved in the event to mean more to the young physician than the calls of many bedizened footmen in glittering equipages might have done.

The humble messenger boy brought a note addressed to Dr. Stanfield. It was written in the hand of a high-bred woman of the old school, and couched in the third person.

"Miss Imboden asks that Dr. Stanfield shall call upon her professionally at his earliest convenience to-day. She sends a cab which she begs him to use."

The note gave no address, but the cab driver had his instructions. He drove through such streets as were least ripped up by the gas companies, paving companies, and the rest of the companies that assume and exercise proprietary rights in the streets of New York, and at last delivered his passenger at a house in the antique neighborhood of Stuyvesant Square, where self-confident respectability still asserts its superiority to mere wealth and fashion, and holds its own against the encroachments of the green grocer on the one hand and the tenement-house proprietor on the other.

The house at whose door Field Stanfield was set down was a brick structure of spacious, old-fashioned design. Its parlor floor was raised by no more than the height of two or three steps above the street level. Entering, Stanfield was

ushered into a sombrely draped parlor, whence he expected presently to be summoned to some sick room above. Instead, a sunny-faced and white-capped maid asked him to follow her to the sun parlor, an apartment of glass which had been built out upon what had formerly been the back-yard of the premises.

There he found Miss Imboden awaiting him. His first skilled glance showed him that she was in no sense an invalid, and as if in response to the inquiry of that glance, Miss Imboden promptly said: —

“I’m not ill, Doctor, and I haven’t a sick person under my roof. Nevertheless, I’ve asked you to make this call professionally.”

She was a well-preserved woman of fifty, or possibly a little more or less. In a mature woman’s age five years, one way or the other, do not count. She was manifestly in the enjoyment of perfect health.

“I hope the light doesn’t afflict your eyes, Doctor,” she said as she motioned him to a seat under the glass roof and surrounded by the glass walls. “I’m a daughter of the sun, and in this climate I find it necessary to court it.”

“It is altogether agreeable to me, too,” he

answered. "I have lived much in sunny lands."

"Yes, I know," she said. "As a boy you lived upon the Nile, and you have lived since in France and Italy and for a time in Spain. You must be well seasoned to the sun."

If the little woman had told him in her placid, even voice precisely what he had taken for his breakfast that morning, the young man could hardly have been more astonished. But she made haste to give him no time for inquiry as to the sources of her information.

"I have asked you to call, Doctor," she hurriedly said, "because I want to enlist your professional services in behalf of certain patients whom I am looking after. Let me explain. I have the misfortune to be a very rich woman. I am trying to use a wealth that I do not want, in ministry to those who have wants and no wealth. I have put myself in the way of knowing of a great many cases of illness among the poor. Of course they could go to the hospitals, but in many cases they won't. Besides, the hospitals, as I understand, are overtaxed. Is it not so? You served in one of them for a year or two, I think?"



THE YOUNG MAN COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN MORE ASTONISHED.
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"Yes," he answered, again wondering at her apparently minute acquaintance with his personal history. "Yes, the hospitals are at times badly overtaxed, but that is only because people who could well afford to pay doctors' bills prefer to be charity patients instead. Why, in the out-patient department we used to have as patients women in sealskin sacques, and some of them even came in their own carriages."

"Yes, I know," she said. "It is for a different class that I am trying to provide. It is for people who can't pay for medical attendance, and who won't ask for free treatment at the hospitals, and for other people who for one reason or another can't or won't avail themselves of the hospital service. Believe me, I know my patients. I have my own way of finding out about them. Now I want these patients of mine attended, and treated by a competent physician, at my expense. I have sent for you to ask if you will undertake the task. You have skill, learning, hospital experience, and all the rest of it, and particularly, you can talk with these people in their own languages. You speak French, German, Italian, and Spanish, together with enough of the Scandinavian and Eastern European languages for our

purpose. You have even been to the trouble to acquire some knowledge of the Jewish jargon, called Yiddish, and that is a very great advantage, for the reason that that jargon is the only language understood by a multitude of the poor on the East Side."

Field Stanfield was still further astonished by this speech. How did this little woman know so much about his linguistic acquirements? And especially how did she know that he had made himself master of Yiddish,—a fact that, so far as he could remember, he had never mentioned to anybody?

But Miss Imboden gave him no time for questioning. She proceeded at once to her purpose.

"It seems to me," she said, "that you are a physician peculiarly well equipped to do the work that is required in my ministry among the poor, and therefore I wish to engage your professional services in that direction. I have been trying to find out your address for some time past, but it does not yet appear in the city directory or the telephone book. It is fortunate for me that the interview with you, published in *The Universe* this morning, fell under my eyes."

Instantly Stanfield replied:—

"Really, Miss Imboden, I had nothing to do with that publication. I am not the graceless self-advertiser that the interview would justify you in thinking me. I happen to know the newspaper man who wrote the thing, and I dined with him at a restaurant; but I hadn't the slightest notion that he was interviewing me for publication. I was only explaining —"

"I quite understand," she interrupted; "I know something of the ways of newspaper men. In this case their eagerness for news has served me an excellent turn."

She had touched a button under the table, and at this moment a maid entered, to whom the mistress said: —

"Ask Miss Winifred to come to me here, and bring her memorandum, if she has it ready."

A few minutes later a young woman entered the room, with a paper in her hand, which she gave to Miss Imboden. Dr. Stanfield had risen as she entered, and while Miss Imboden glanced over the paper, he looked at the girl with eyes that were trained to quick observation. She was of the medium height, or perhaps a trifle under that, and her figure was well-nigh perfect, as she stood there, clad in a simple white gown, with her hair brushed

down as smoothly as its predisposition to curl would permit. She was not beautiful, in any conventional way, but there was something in her countenance that was strangely attractive. She was not quite a blonde, but her complexion was fair and clear, and her hair, which was abundant, was brown, with a glint of copper in it under certain lights. Her eyes were large, long-lashed, and of a singularly limpid gray. But to Dr. Stanfield that which seemed written in her face was of greater interest than the face itself — perhaps because he could not quite make out the writing. It was not trouble, as he at first thought, but a certain passionate sincerity and earnestness, which he interpreted as the record of a mind and soul capable of deeply tender sympathies.

“The girl is of a joyous nature,” he thought, “but her mind is occupied with serious things. Perhaps she has suffered, though that is less likely than that she has seen and sympathized with more than her share of suffering not her own.”

He had only a few moments for these observations and reflections, for after a very hasty glance at the paper, Miss Imboden rose and introduced the pair.

"Doctor," she said, "let me present you to Miss Winifred Fair, who assists me in my work. You will have occasion to see a good deal of her."

Then, turning to the girl, she asked two or three questions concerning the things written on the paper, after which she turned again to the young doctor.

"I have a list here," she said, "of sick people whom I should like you to visit to-day and every day hereafter so long as they may need your services. I shall ask you to call upon me here every day at this hour, to let me know how your patients get on, and to receive the addresses of new ones from time to time. Once a month, promptly, please, you will send me a memorandum of the amount due for your professional services. I ask that in order that I may keep my own business affairs in shape. I have a special horror of leaving things at loose ends even for a day. So please do not fail to hand me the memorandum promptly each month. Let it be on the last day of each month, please, as I draw all my checks at that time. You are to visit and treat these patients of mine, if you please, precisely as if they were inmates of my own house, and you are to charge precisely the same for each visit to one of them

that you would charge if you were called here to minister to Winifred or me. And you are to count your daily visit to me here as a professional call, charging me for it as you would if I were ill, as I never am."

"Surely, Miss Imboden," interrupted the young man, "you'll excuse me from obeying that last injunction of yours. It would be quite unpro—"

"Not at all," she interrupted. "I summon you to my house to see me professionally, though I'm not ill. I take your time, and it is my imperative rule in life to pay for everything I ask for. You must let a woman have her own way, particularly when she is old enough to be in the habit of having it. Now, there is one other thing," she hastened to add, probably for the purpose of forestalling further argument on a matter that she had decided once for all; "I beg you to keep your eyes open to these people's conditions and needs, and to report them to me daily. You see, I may sometimes wish to provide for them something apart from medical attendance. By the way, have you a telephone in your office?"

"No," he answered frankly; "I cannot afford it yet."

"I suppose not," she answered. "But now

that your practice is to increase, you'll be able to afford it. In the meanwhile, with your permission and for my own convenience, I'll order one put in. You can repay me when you are in funds."

"Thank you very much," he answered, "but that will not be necessary. I think I can manage to have the instrument put in without troubling you."

"Yes, by going into debt," she said, "and that's a very bad thing. No, I'll attend to the matter — go and telephone the order now, Winifred, please, and tell those people they must have it in working order by night, or Miss Imboden will be greatly displeased."

The girl swept a courteous adieu as she left the room.

"But really, Miss Imboden, I shall be running into debt just the same if you do that."

"Not at all. I've given you a list of eleven patients, to each of whom you will pay several visits. To-morrow I shall probably swell the list to twenty, and at any rate there will never be less than ten or a dozen sick people under your charge, for whose treatment I make myself responsible. So before the end of this month I shall be owing you a good deal more than the

cost of the telephone. You see, we hear of accidents, wounds, and dangerously sudden illnesses, sometimes, and it is a long way from here to your office. I want to be able to speak to you or have Winifred speak to you promptly in every such case. So that's settled. Now I shall let you go on your rounds. You'll call to-morrow at the appointed hour?"

There was a certain gentle imperiousness in the woman's manner which Field Stanfield found it impossible to resist or even to combat with argument or protestation. She was obviously accustomed to have her way, as she had said, and she was not minded to depart from the custom. There was nothing to do but to obey.

"And after all," he reflected as he ran down the steps, "she puts it all on a business basis. I wonder who and what she is, anyhow? And I wonder who Winifred Fair is?"

XI

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JOE BLAKE

DR. STANFIELD was a very weary young man, but a very happy one, when he returned to his office late that afternoon and found Joe Blake's letter awaiting him. His eleven professional visits had involved many miles of walking through that intricate network of big and little streets that constitutes the East Side. It had involved, also, the climbing of many long flights of dark tenement-house stairs.

But Field Stanfield was a young man and a very vigorous one, so that the physical weariness he felt after his hard day's work counted for little in his reckoning. Far worse was the soul weariness due to the glimpses he had that day got of the poverty that suffers and is not strong. He had never encountered such conditions before. He remembered that as a boy his soul had been sorely afflicted by what he had seen of the wretchedness of the Egyptian fellaheen, but

until now he had never realized that far worse conditions are endured every day in the great rich American city. He had not known, except by hearsay as it were, how dark the shadows are just outside the flare and glitter and glory of the wealthy quarters of the town, or how hopeless of amendment the harder conditions of life in New York are.

Indeed, he did not yet see or believe the latter truth. That was a lesson he had yet to learn. What he had seen on this day, and what he was to see on many days following, served only to awaken in his mind a compassionate purpose to find out a way of bettering things, and to teach the world that better way. The spirit of an apostle was awake within him, and with the overconfidence of youth and inexperience, he began looking forward to the time when he should be able to stir the great generous heart of New York in behalf of its downtrodden classes, and to teach it the means and methods of uplifting. To that work he was resolved to devote his best energies and his life-long endeavors.

He was happy now in the thought that a way had been opened to him for the doing of such work, and the happiness outweighed the weariness

and banished the depression that the sights of that first day of real work in his profession had produced in his mind.

"I must have a horse and vehicle," he reflected, "if this work grows upon my hands as Miss Imboden says that it will. I'll need them as a means of covering long distances quickly. I'll buy them with the first money I have after this telephone is paid for. I see the workmen have finished their task of installing it. Obviously the hint that delay would displease Miss Imboden has had influence with the telephone people. I wonder who and what she is, anyhow, and I wonder who Winifred Fair is?"

As if under inspiration of his thought, the telephone bell jingled at that moment, and he answered the call. It was Winifred Fair, who, in behalf of Miss Imboden, wished to know if the instrument was in place ready for use. When he had told her so much, the girl added:—

"Miss Imboden forgot to ask you this morning to keep your own counsel with respect to her agency in sending you to attend your patients. She does not want her name mentioned in the matter, now or at any time hereafter. She asks me to tell you that this is vitally important. You

are to act, if you please, precisely as you would if all these sick people had themselves sent for you, and were able to afford the attendance of a physician."

Stanfield gave the desired assurance, whereupon the young woman said:—

"Very well. That's all, except that Miss Imboden hopes your hard day's work has not over-fatigued you."

"Thank her for her kind solicitude," the young man answered, "and please say to her that the work has interested me more than anything else ever did. I am full of enthusiasm and eagerness to do something for these people. Good-by."

He looked at his watch. It was time for him to join Joe Blake at dinner. At first thought he wished that he might excuse himself, for his mind was full of things that interested him more than his friend's insequent chatter was likely to do. But upon reflection he was glad of the opportunity to sit for an hour at dinner with a man who was chronically and constitutionally happy, while professing the gloomiest pessimism.

"It will be a relief," he thought, "after all the wretchedness I have seen to-day, to see some-

thing of another sort. And, fortunately, Miss Imboden's injunction of secrecy and silence forbids me to explain matters to Blake. It is just as well. He would not in the least care for the explanation. There isn't any 'story' in it for him. But he'll be puzzled to guess how it is that a practice has come to me so suddenly."

When the two met at the Metropole, Blake broke at once into a regretful apology for what he had done. Stanfield interrupted him:—

"Never mind, old fellow. You meant it all for the best, and it hasn't done me any real harm. Besides, I'm too tired to-night to listen to your needless protestations of regret. I've been very busy, and I don't want to hear anything but your lightest and most inconsequent chatter for the next hour."

"But what have you been busy at?" queried his friend.

"At my practice, to be sure. I had a small surgical case at my office this morning —"

"Yes, I know, and got two plunks for it. Mrs. Moloney was good enough to tell me about it. But that couldn't have kept you going all day, unless, perhaps, you took pains to throw your patient into an interesting attack of lockjaw that

has required all day to cure. In that case, you must tell me about it, and I'll make a 'story' of it."

"It isn't my custom," answered Stanfield, smiling at his friend's humorous conceit, "to treat my surgical cases in a way likely to result in attacks of tetanus; so there's no 'story' in the matter for you. No, I have had about a dozen other cases to attend to-day at the houses of my patients."

"What? A dozen cases? Why, how on earth did that happen? Was there an explosion or a street-car accident, or something else that the evening papers missed?"

"Nothing of the kind. My patients are wholly unrelated to each other, and their maladies are various. You'll be interested to know that two of them have typhoid fever. I believe you have a special appreciation of that disease. Another has a gangrened foot, or had till I amputated the leg above the knee to-day."

"Why so high up? Why couldn't you simply cut off the foot and save the rest of the leg?"

"I shall not explain the matter to you," answered Stanfield, laughing.

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of spoiling my dinner. I'm hardened —"

"Yes, I know. But you couldn't resist the temptation to make a 'story' of it. And besides, I want to talk of other things or, rather, I want to listen while you talk."

"But tell me," persisted Blake, "how you managed to jump into a practice in a single day. 'Pon my word, I won't make a 'story' out of it—or if I do, I won't mention your name."

"There are other reasons for not telling you that, Joe, and they are very imperative reasons, too. In fact, there's a woman in the case. I shall be busy every day now, and I may tell you that, in a rather curious way, the publication of your interview brought it about, or at least hastened it. So —"

"There! I told you it was kismet of a good kind. But I'd give a week's pay to hear the whole story."

"Well, you've heard all that you're going to hear of it. So let's talk of something else."

"Field Stanfield, you're the most obstinately and provokingly reticent fellow I ever saw. But here's the soup."

Blake began to rattle at once. He knew, by sight and name at least, more than half the people

at the tables round about, though he was personally acquainted with none of them.

"That tall fellow, way over there," he said, "the one that looks so melancholy, is Juniper the comedian, you know — the 'bright, particular star' of comic opera. Wonder who the lady is? Oh, I know. She's the new chorus girl. Probably Juniper is going to marry again. He often does, you know."

"I didn't know," answered Stanfield. "Is the mortality rate specially high among the women who successively consent to share his fortunes?"

"Oh, no; quite the contrary. He's had three wives since he came to New York, and all three are enjoying excellent health. There's one of them in the corner opposite. She's the wife of a particularly proper millionaire old hunx now. In fact, all Juniper's ex-wives seem to better themselves when they shake him off and make a new throw."

"It's horrible!" exclaimed Stanfield.

"What's horrible? That the dear creatures should do better at the second attempt — improving by practice, as it were?"

"No; I mean the way such people flaunt

their indifference to all that is holy in marriage in the face of the community, and the indifference with which the community accepts the affront. The thing is not only horrible — it is one of the greatest dangers that threaten our civilization. It is a cancerous growth that ought to be cut out and cauterized.”

“Oh, I suppose so. I never thought of the matter in that way. It’s interesting, and it affords some of the very juiciest newspaper stories going. It gives a certain picturesqueness to life. It interests and amuses thousands of people who would suffer dulness otherwise. There’s the case of Temple, for example. He’s a *matinée* favorite, you know. Thousands of women, old and young, and middle-aged, married, single, widowed, and divorced, have worshipped what they call his ‘art’ for years. They mean, of course, his soft voice, the perfect ‘tailoring’ of his clothes, and his grace of motion as he moves about the stage. But in all these years the satisfaction of their souls in the worship of his ‘art’ has been inadequate. It has been understood that he was happily married, that he lived respectably with his wife, that he paid his butcher and grocer, and generally behaved himself off the

stage as any comfortably well-off haberdasher might. But a little while ago, to the astonishment of everybody, his wife brought a suit for divorce, maintenance, alimony, counsel fees, and all the rest of it, and immediately his worshippers multiplied their numbers by ten, and their enthusiasm by infinity. He was 'just lovely' before; he is 'so charmingly interesting' now."

"And don't you think," asked Stanfield, "that all that is a symptom of decay, dry rot, corruption in our society, in precisely the place where such decadence of morals is most lamentably threatening — namely, among women, who should be the peculiar guardians of morals?"

"I really suppose it is so, now that you mention it," answered Blake. "It is horrible, of course, as you say, and I suppose something ought to be done about it. But there are so many things that something ought to be done about, you know, that one can't bother to keep tab on them all. Besides, it's the business of the editorial writers to attend to all that. I'm only a space reporter, you know."

"You mean to say you have no convictions, no opinions, no concern for the betterment of life?"

"Those are forbidden fruits to me. I can't afford opinions. I very nearly lost my job by entertaining one a little while ago. You see, the editorial writers have a monopoly of that — we reporters must deal only with facts, and must handle even the facts so as to buttress the opinions of the editorial page."

"Listen to me, Joe Blake," Stanfield interrupted. "You are talking now from your teeth out. You are maligning yourself. In your position you have opportunities such as few men enjoy of acquainting yourself with life. You are a man of brains, education, culture, good breeding, and all else that tends to make a man earnest and sincere. When you cynically profess to have no care, no convictions, no opinions, but to regard what you see as indifferently as a photographic camera might, I simply do not believe you. You are too warm-blooded for that. You do care. If you didn't, you wouldn't be here at this moment. You are here because you thought you had done me an injury. You are here because you care."

Stanfield was a man capable of persistent silences, and he often indulged in such. But he was capable also of very impassioned utterance

when occasion served. As he spoke now, with a heat as of lightning in his tone, Blake regarded him with undisguised admiration. But at the end of it all he said:—

“The people at five of these tables are staring at you and listening. You have ‘won your audience,’ as the public speakers say. But it is true that I have the impulse* sometimes to form strong opinions and to express them. That is only because of a weakness of human nature. Try as one may to suppress inborn tendencies, one can never quite succeed. It is like cultivating a garden. You don’t want weeds in it, and you fight weeds constantly with all the agencies of destruction you possess. Nevertheless, the weeds spring up overnight, and their presence has its effect upon your flower beds.”

“Of course you know,” said Stanfield, “that there is nothing so misleading as a metaphor; nothing so false in logic as a simile. You assume that your best impulses are weeds in the garden, when in fact—oh, you know you are misrepresenting yourself. You do care for your fellow-beings—”

“For a very few of them, yes. That again is a weakness. It is mere proximity that makes

the joys and sorrows of others seem important to us. There was a despatch in this morning's papers reporting that sixteen hundred persons had been drowned by a Chinese flood; I venture to say you read no more than the head-line, and presently forgot even that. Yet if any guest at any of these tables should fall dead, — though they are all as utter strangers to you as those unfortunates in China were, — you would be moved to a sympathy that would spoil your dinner and perhaps your night's sleep. The difference is merely that of nearness or distance. Did you ever look down from a high place upon the people in the streets below? Didn't they look like ants or flies? And, in fact, aren't they equally insignificant, inconsiderable, except in so far as we acquire sympathy with them by accidental nearness? No human being is really of any consequence except to a very few others. You run your eye over a column of death notices quite without emotion, unless you are shocked and grieved by the inclusion of some name that is near to you in the list. Now each of those others, whose death announcements make no impression whatever upon you, was of supreme consequence within his own little circle. More-

over, each of them has seemed to those nearest to him to be almost indispensable to the continuance of things. In the case of each it has seemed that the world must come to a stop with his departure from it. Yet before the grass has had time to grow upon his grave, those to whom his continuance in life has seemed so absolutely necessary will have readjusted their affairs to the new conditions, and after a very little while all things will be going on quite as if he had never lived. Those who had held him to be of the most vital consequence will have learned that in fact he was of no consequence at all. Think of it! There are several thousands of millions of human beings in the world, and there have been other thousands of millions coming and going throughout all the ages. Is it conceivable that any one or any thousand, or any multitude of them, was or is of consequence in the sum total of human existence? Nations that seemed to be all-important have been blotted out, and the world has gone on just the same. Destroy an ant-hill and slaughter every individual ant within it. What difference does it make? The sum total of ant existence is in no way affected, and within a very brief while there will be as many

ants in the world as before. It is so with the nations of men. Or look at it in another way. The man who is hopelessly wretched and despairing to-day will be fairly comfortable presently and perhaps exuberantly happy after a while, if he doesn't cut off his chance of that by committing suicide in his present mood of despair. 'When things are at their worst, they sometimes mend,' says one adage. 'It is a long lane that has no turning,' says another. 'The darkest hour is just before the dawn,' is another of like significance. The whole of proverbial philosophy teaches the same lesson as the crystallized wisdom of all human experience. History is eloquent in the same way. When Thomas Jefferson was elected President in 1800, half the country went into soul mourning over the final collapse of free institutions and the failure of our American experiment. Yet not only does the Republic survive a hundred years later, but men of every shade of political belief look back upon Jefferson's administration as one that enormously augmented the Republic's greatness and in a large measure actually created it."

"Then you think that the weal or woe, the riches or poverty, the life or death of individuals,

— even multitudes of individuals — is a matter of infinitely small concern, and that events are equally inconsequent in the sum total of human history?”

“Yes — something like that — at least to-night. I may think differently to-morrow, you know, and in still another way next week. What difference does it make, anyhow? Joe Blake is an undistinguished and indistinguishable atom in the sum total of humanity — one insignificant unit in a mass composed of many billions, and every individual composing those billions will be dead and gone, giving place to other evanescent billions, within a period shorter than that of a parrot’s life or an oak tree’s growth. What matters it whether Joe Blake thinks one thing or another?”

“It matters much to Joe Blake,” said Stanfield, as the pair rose from the table. “For ‘as a man thinketh so he is.’ Fortunately you do not really believe or act upon any such damnable philosophy. If such beliefs were generally accepted, this world would be a pig-sty, and worse.”

“Are you sure that it isn’t a pig-sty?” asked Blake.

“Let us talk of something else,” answered Stanfield. And presently the two parted.

XII

WINIFRED'S POINT OF VIEW

STANFIELD continued his daily visits to Miss Imboden at her house near Stuyvesant Square, and little by little his curiosity regarding that lady was aroused. For one thing, he was not long in discovering that she did not really live in the house at which he was expected to make a daily visit. The knowledge of this fact came to him indirectly and piecemeal, as it were. Often she was not there when he arrived, and he had to wait ten minutes — rarely more — for her coming. He observed that when she came, she gave her coachman directions before dismissing him. He observed also that when she thus came in from her morning drive she did not go upstairs to lay off her hat and wraps, as she would have done if this had been her home, but deposited them instead in a closet opening off the sun parlor.

These things and others of like kind might

have meant nothing in themselves, but other things occurred from time to time which gave them significance. One morning she said to Winifred Fair:—

“I wish you’d stop by and bring me a thicker wrap to-day. It is growing cold. I ought to have thought of it.”

At another time she said to Winifred:—

“I left that paper at home. I’ll bring it to-morrow. That will be time enough.”

Stanfield observed, also, that when he called up the Stuyvesant Square house on the telephone late in the evening on two or three occasions, it was Winifred Fair and not Miss Imboden who answered. And on one occasion, when he specially wanted to communicate with Miss Imboden personally, Winifred answered that she was “out” and could not say when she would be “in.” After that, he observed, it was always possible to get Miss Imboden on the ’phone by waiting long enough for a switch communication to be put into operation.

Putting one thing with another, after the mental habit of the scientific man, Field Stanfield was convinced that the house in Stuyvesant Square was not the actual residence of Miss

Imboden. The matter was of no consequence, of course. If Miss Imboden desired to maintain the appearance of a residence there, while actually living somewhere else, in what conceivable way was it any concern of his?

He saw Miss Imboden every day at the time and place appointed. He received from her each day a list of the sick poor whom she wished him to visit. He rendered to her each month his bill for professional services, and by the next mail he received her check in payment.

He observed that these checks were peculiar. They were signed simply "Miss Imboden," with no given name. They were made out not to his order, but to that of Winifred Fair, and by her indorsed to him.

This was puzzling, but Field Stanfield decided that it was none of his business. His practice was increasing satisfactorily, quite apart from the cases he was asked by Miss Imboden to attend. He was called to many houses in the more fashionable quarters by wealthy people of whom he had never heard, so that presently his horse was overworked and he had to set up two carriages, with a pair of horses to each, by way of meeting the demands upon his attention.

He presently removed, at Miss Imboden's suggestion, from West Twenty-sixth Street to Madison Avenue, taking a whole house there, and setting up an establishment, with a "John Henry" in livery instead of a boy in buttons, to answer his door-bell. But the "John Henry" was Mrs. Moloney's husband, and Mrs. Moloney was Field Stanfield's housekeeper. Thus is loyalty sometimes rewarded in this ill-regulated world of ours.

But while Dr. Field Stanfield continued to receive his daily instruction concerning his poorer patients from Miss Imboden, it was with Winifred Fair that he mainly had to deal. That young woman often rode with him on his rounds, and upon occasion she assumed a positively surprising authority to act upon Miss Imboden's behalf without consulting that gentlewoman. On one such occasion she and Stanfield were visiting a family that included some sick babies. The family was housed in a peculiarly crowded, dark, and unwholesome tenement, and observing the difficulty the doctor had in dealing with the physical conditions, the girl asked what it was that made the place such a pest hole.

"The infamous condition of the plumbing," he

answered. "That and nothing else. I have reported it to the Health Board and have received promises of amendment galore. But nothing has been done, and nothing will be done. That is because the landlord has 'political pull.'"

Any ordinary young woman would have wanted to know what "political pull" was, and all the rest of it. But Winifred Fair, as Field Stanfield had often observed, was not at all an ordinary young woman. She made no pretence of understanding things, except in practical ways, looking toward remedy.

"I don't understand that," she said on this occasion. "No, don't explain; I don't know anything about politics and such things. Do you know where there is a thoroughly good and trustworthy plumber's place?"

"Yes — I know one near at hand, but he is expensive."

"Will you drive me to his shop in your carriage? I've walked almost too much to-day."

The doctor assented, again warning the young woman that the plumber in question was a man who charged far more than any tenement-house proprietor could afford.

The girl said nothing in response. Upon their

arrival at the plumber's shop, she said to the proprietor:—

“I want you to go at once to this place and inspect. Then I want you to set your men at work instantly, tear out every pipe and trap and faucet in the house, and put new ones in their place—the very best there are from a sanitary point of view. Of course we don't want any silver or nickel mountings, but we must have the most perfectly sanitary plumbing possible.”

“That will be costly for a tenement house,” answered the man.

“Of course. I expect that. Will a check for a hundred dollars be sufficient as an advance? You'll render your bill for the rest to Miss Imboden. You've worked for her before, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes. That's all right, young lady. I didn't know.”

Winifred drew out a check book from one of those mysterious bags that gentlewomen carry, and passed it over to Stanfield, saying:—

“Please fill out the check for a hundred dollars.”

He opened the little pocket check book and saw at a glance that all the blank checks in it

were already signed "Miss Imboden," and made payable to "Winifred Fair or order."

"You see, Doctor, it always puzzles me a little to make out a check. It seems so much like business or affidavits, or something of that sort. So Miss Imboden spares me. She signs all the checks, and makes them payable to my order, so that if anybody else should get hold of them and fill in the amounts, the checks wouldn't be good without my indorsement."

"I see, and I think it an excellent plan; but will Miss Imboden approve this expenditure?" asked the doctor. "I fancy that man will run up a bill of two or three hundred dollars on her."

The girl laughed silently. Then she said:—

"Of course he will. But what has that to do with the matter?"

"Why, perhaps we ought to have bargained a little. You know plumbers —"

"It is all right," she answered.

"But suppose Miss Imboden should object?"

"She won't," answered the girl, and as she said no more the conversation ended there.

But it set Dr. Field Stanfield thinking. He knew absolutely nothing of these two women with whom he was dealing, and under whose

orders he was acting. The circumstances of the morning reminded him that his own monthly checks were drawn by Miss Imboden to the order of Winifred Fair, and indorsed to him by her. He wondered why. He wondered who and what and why and wherefore Miss Imboden was, and still more he wondered concerning Winifred Fair.

For one thing, that young woman had asked him suddenly one day to cease addressing her as "Miss Fair" and to call her "just Winifred" instead. And she, in her turn, and without request or warning or apology of any kind, had from that time forth addressed him by his given name "Field," except in the presence of others. In their presence she spoke to and of him always at "Dr. Stanfield."

All these things had prompted him to make a study of the girl, whom he saw every day, with whom he was in frequent telephonic converse every day and many times a day, and with whom he rode frequently in their joint ministrations to Miss Imboden's sick poor.

He knew nothing about her, except what he had learned of her in these ways. That she was sweet and wholesome, he had no difficulty in find-

ing out. But beyond that he knew nothing except as little by little his own gift of observation informed him. In that way it was easy for him to learn much. There was nothing subtle about the girl. In heart and spirit she was the merest child — frank, outspoken, and confiding in an extreme degree. But her modesty was such that in all her confidings very little of herself was revealed.

He soon discovered that her education had been good in a conventional way, but had not inspired her with much of self-confidence. Such self-confidence as she showed arose from a different source. She was inspired by an utter integrity that instinctively trusted itself as the frankness of a truthful child does. Having no false pretense to maintain, she had no need to be afraid. She had been drilled at the piano as other girls are, but seeing clearly that she had no musical gift, she never touched the instrument. Why should she make a clamorous noise and miscall it music?

She read books of all kinds. Some of them she read because they delighted her. Others, which seemed to her dull, she read with equal conscientiousness because she thought she ought to do so.

Her thinking was utterly honest and absolutely fearless. She was wholly unconscious of the fact that she had wrought out a philosophy of life for herself. Indeed, she would have been sorely puzzled to say precisely what constitutes a philosophy of life or of anything else. Yet so perfectly had she done this that Field Stanfield used to take a good deal of pains to draw her out upon the subject.

She accepted humanity as she found it. She had never a thought that it could be altered for better or for worse. The character of every man and woman seemed to her simply a fact, — fortunate or the reverse, as the case might be, — but a fact subject to no influence of change, and deserving neither of praise nor of blame. She no more censured one person for being bad, or praised another for being good, than she reproached one tree for being gnarled and misshapen, or commended another for its symmetry and comeliness. She regarded both as the creatures of circumstances, for which they were in no way answerable because they had no part in determining what the circumstances of their life and growth should be.

She never formulated this her philosophy, but one day Field Stanfield formulated it for her.

"You are a fatalist," he said.

"Am I? I didn't know."

"You do not believe in human responsibility. You regard all human creatures as the helpless products of heredity and environment. You therefore give nobody credit for good qualities or blame for bad ones."

"I don't know," she answered. "Perhaps you are right, but it doesn't seem to me that I think in just that way. It is only that something like that — not exactly that, but something like it — is everywhere obvious to us. I think when people are bad it isn't quite fair to blame them. Generally, they don't know any better. And when they do know better, they are not strong enough to do the right thing when they are strongly tempted to do the wrong thing instead. You see, they have inclinations born in them, and they have necessities of their own that seem to them more important than anything else. Now, for example, if you were — no, I'll put it the other way — if I were to steal your watch or your purse, there would be no excuse for me. I know better, and besides I have no terrible need for money — no need that puts me under an irresistible temptation. If I should do such a thing as that,

I ought to be sent to prison and punished severely. But it was different when my watch was stolen and pawned the other day. The man who stole it is laid up so that he cannot work. His wife is dying of consumption, and his children are so ill that you are visiting them every day. That man has a terrible need for money. Even the small sum he got from the pawnbroker for my watch seemed to him of greater consequence than millions would seem to me, because he terribly needed the small sum, while I do not need the millions. It seems to me there is a difference."

Field Stanfield looked earnestly into the girl's limpid gray eyes, and after a moment asked:—

"What did you do in that case?"

"Why, I bought his pawn ticket for two dollars and then went and redeemed the watch."

"You ought not to have done that, Winifred."

"What ought I to have done?"

"You should have had the man arrested for theft, and you should have made the pawnbroker — who was in all probability a conscious receiver of stolen property — give up your watch without any payment whatever."

"I don't like you to feel in that way, Field,"

said the girl, with a suggestion of tears in her voice.

"But why not? It is simple justice."

"Who could stand simple justice, Field? I couldn't, and I doubt if even you could. But that isn't the point. I don't think it would have been just to do as you say. The pawnbroker had advanced money on the watch. It seems to me it was only fair that he should have his money back. As for the man that took the watch, I have told you that he was under the temptation of a terrible need — a need such as neither you nor I ever knew in our lives. Now when this need was on him, impelling him to get money in any way he could, I gave him an opportunity to yield to the temptation. I carelessly laid my watch on the medicine stand, where it would stare at his hungry eyes and tempt him beyond his feeble power of resistance. The fault was mine, and I had no right to make him take the punishment."

Field Stanfield again looked at the girl admiringly. After a little he said: —

"Your way of thinking is all wrong, I suppose, but somehow I like you to feel in that way."

"But why — if it is wrong?"

"Because it shows me that *you* are so utterly right — in your sympathies, at least. I must go now," looking at his watch. "I have two patients to see, and there will be others awaiting me at my office."

But as he left the room he turned and asked her: —

"You think, then, that no one is responsible — that no one should be punished?"

Winifred stood still in astonishment.

"Why should you care what I think?" she asked.

"Because you think sincerely and freely. I try to think sincerely, but I cannot think freely — as yet."

"But why not? It seems so simple."

"To you, yes. But to me, no. I have been educated in conventional forms. I am just beginning to learn that the moulds of my thinking may be misshapen. Won't you answer my question?"

"Of course, if you care for the answer. I do not hold that nobody is responsible for his acts, or that nobody should be punished. I should say that if you did any wrong thing you ought to be punished for it, because you know better and

you are subject to no overmastering temptation." Here she paused a moment, after which she added: —

"Of course you might have such a temptation as to some of the more complex relations of life — in an unhappy marriage, for example. I don't know enough about such things, to be sure. But for any ordinary crime or vice you would be responsible and should be punished."

"I think I understand," he said. "Thank you. Good day."

XIII

THE GHOST OF AN OLD LOVE

BEING a person of entire sanity of mind, Field Stanfield was in no danger of being misled by Joe Blake's pessimism on the one hand or by Winifred Fair's optimism on the other. He was in the habit of doing his own thinking. He was too sane to believe with Blake that humanity is so insignificant a thing and in itself so transitory and so evanescent that neither its weal nor its woe, its good behavior nor its bad, could make any important difference in the general economy of the universe. It was equally impossible for him to share Winifred's excessive mercifulness of view, that the great majority are properly to be held irresponsible because of their ignorance, their weakness, and the extent of their temptations. But these things set him thinking. They opened his mind to the possible fallacy of all our conclusions. They awakened in him an

unaccustomed tolerance of mind, and to that extent made him a broader man than he had been.

"As for Joe Blake," he said to himself, "he simply doesn't think any of the things he professes to think. Perhaps he thinks that he thinks them, but every act of his life shows clearly that he does not. He is the tenderest-hearted fellow alive — the fullest of human sympathy and kindness."

Stanfield was perfectly sincere when he told Winifred that while he regarded her view as utterly wrong, he nevertheless *liked* her to feel in that way. "For after all," he reflected, "what one feels is of immeasurably more importance than what one thinks. I told Joe Blake that 'as a man thinks so he is,' but that isn't true. As a man feels so he is, and Winifred's feeling is that of an immeasurably loving and tender woman's soul, full of compassion, of mercy, of forgiveness, and of all good. It is the spirit that inspires all motherhood, all womanhood, and lets us love it so. It is the spirit that makes life sweet and wholesome, that renders marriage holy and motherhood sacred. It is true, as she suggested, that not one of us could endure the test of simple

justice. Weighed in exact scales, every one of us would be found wanting. We have need every hour of Winifred's philosophy of forgiveness because of our ignorance and our frailty. And mainly we look to women for such mercifulness of judgment. They are not coldly and hardly just, thank God."

As he thus pondered the matter a question suddenly arose in his mind to startle him. Why should he so greatly care what Winifred said or thought or felt?

He could not answer the question, even to himself. The girl was nothing to him, he was sure. He had seen her every day for months, of course. He and she had worked together during all that time in that compassionate ministry to which Miss Imboden had called them both, and he had learned to admire her simple-hearted sincerity of devotion to the work, her tireless self-sacrifice in behalf of others, whose sole claim upon her was that of a common humanity. He had learned, too, to hold her mind as well as her soul in admiration. Underneath her modest withdrawal of herself from even her own consideration, he had seen in her an abounding common sense and a wisdom superior in its shrewdness to

any that he had observed in any other woman or any man. It was an intuitional wisdom, with the hardest kind of common sense and the tenderest sympathy with human frailty for its foundations.

But the woman herself? What was she to him? Was he not a man who had already passed through his one soul-consuming experience of love? Nay, rather was he not a man already in love to the utmost limit of his capacity of loving? Had he not given to Carolyn Blake all that he had to give in that way? And was not Carolyn alive somewhere? And was it not his fixed and determined purpose to search out her hiding place and claim her for his own just so soon as he should find himself securely established in his profession, just so soon as he should be able to ask her, with head erect and no beggary in his tone, to be his wife?

By way of guarding and bracing himself against the temptation of Winifred Fair, he set himself deliberately to recall the fascinations of that other. He was astonished that in the busy whirl of his life during these recent months, he had somehow let the vision of Carolyn Blake fade out of his memory. And as he now tried to recall that vision he found its outlines shadowy and

uncertain. He remembered precisely how she looked. He could recall all the tones of her voice and even certain peculiarities of her speech which once had added to the piquancy of her presence. But the vision of her as he conjured it up did not seem the same that he had worshipped over there by the Seine.

Nevertheless, it seemed to him certain that Carolyn was the only woman he could ever love. She seemed to him a superior sort, unlike all other women, apart from them, above them. He accused himself bitterly of disloyalty in having so far forgotten her superiority as even to entertain a fleeting thought that he might learn to love another woman. He felt that he must jealously guard himself against that mistake. He owed so much to his own integrity of soul. Still more he owed it to Carolyn. For had he not plighted his troth to her in that letter of his?

At this point in his meditations, and just as he was sinking to slumber, the telephone bell rang, and he was hurriedly summoned to do battle throughout the night for the life of a little child. He did not observe the fact, or mark its significance, that during all those hours of anxious combat with disease no thought of Carolyn intruded

itself upon his mind, while many times he wished that his patient might have been some other than the rich man's child that she was, so that he might have summoned Winifred to help him in his ministry and to share with him the fearful anxiety of that night. There were others there to do his bidding — others who cherished the child in tenderest affection — others who were as capable as she. But somehow his mind was beset by a longing that he might have Winifred with him in this struggle with the spectre of child-death.

When at last the morning dawned and his patient slept, and he saw that his fight for the little life was won, he wearily returned to his home, meaning to go at once to bed. But for some reason which he was wholly unable to explain to himself, he felt it necessary to speak with Winifred first. He was accustomed to call her, and she was accustomed to call him, on the telephone at any and all hours, so he rang her up now, though it was only a little past five o'clock in the morning.

When she responded, he realized that in fact he had nothing to say to her — nothing at least that might justify his disturbance of her slumbers.

For a moment this thought sorely disturbed him. Then reflection came to his aid.

"It is her sympathy I want," he said to himself, "and she is always generous with that."

Then in answer to her "hello," he said over the wire:—

"I beg your pardon if I have disturbed your sleep. But I am in sore need of sympathy with my rejoicing. All night long I have been fighting for a precious little life, and I have won the fight. I cannot go to sleep without telling you that. Surely you will understand."

"I understand," she answered, "and I am glad to be waked to receive such a message. But you must sleep now. Remember that your strength belongs to others, not yourself. And between now and your morning office hours you have scant time for needed rest. Be sure of my sympathy, and go to sleep as quickly as you can."

Doubtless the young woman meant what she said, but her message of sympathy failed of its purpose. So far from falling at once to sleep, Field Stanfield did not sleep at all. He lay awake instead, thinking of Winifred Fair.

During these months, Field Stanfield was drawn socially closer and closer to Miss Imboden.

His daily visit to her gradually became rather a matter of form than anything else, so far at least as the work was concerned. Little by little the practical business end of that visit was made a function for Winifred Fair to attend to. It was she who made out Dr. Stanfield's list of the patients whom he was to visit on Miss Imboden's account. It was she who followed up his visits with calls of her own. It was she who closely watched the progress of each case, and it was to her that he reported in every case in which other relief than medical attendance seemed to be called for. Nevertheless Miss Imboden saw him for half an hour or so every morning, and during that time talked with him about the work, and about his other practice, which had grown to considerable proportions.

"I really don't understand how it is," he said to Miss Imboden one morning, "but somehow I seem to be building up a very considerable practice among wealthy people, side by side with my practice as the agent of your charity. I am more and more called to attend rich and well-to-do people, — many of whom I never heard of, — and in most cases one call means another, until presently I find myself recognized as the family

physician. It is very gratifying, of course, but I am puzzled to account for it."

"It ought to be simple enough, I think," answered Miss Imboden. "You were unknown in the town when you began practice, but you have a rare gift of making friends and inspiring confidence. Each of your friends is an unconscious or half-unconscious advertising agent for you, and as your manner is pleasing and your skill all that could be desired, it follows that every family into which you go as a physician commends you to others. I suppose that is the way in which every successful physician's practice is built up. By the way, and speaking of advertising, why have you not brought your friend Joe Blake to see me? I distinctly like him, though I know him only through your accounts of him. Suppose you go to the telephone right now and make an appointment for dinner here this evening at seven-thirty. I'll ask some other people to meet you, making you the guest of honor. Indeed, I've already asked most of the others."

It was Miss Imboden's habit to do things in this irregular, offhand, peremptory fashion, and so the command in no way surprised Stanfield. He turned to the telephone, called up *The Universe*

office, and asked to speak with Blake. That young man promptly responded, and when Stanfield delivered the invitation, Blake risked a rebuke from the telephone company for "swearing" over the wire by responding: "Who the devil is Miss Imboden, anyhow? Never mind. You can tell me about her at some other time. Of course I accept her invitation with pleasure. It is my fixed rule and practice in life to accept all good things that come my way. I'll be there. Good-by."

Turning from the instrument, Stanfield said to Miss Imboden:—

"If you don't happen to like Joe Blake when you come to know him, you must blame only yourself for his introduction. I didn't suggest it, you know."

"I shall like him," she answered, with placid self-confidence. "Indeed, I like him already."

"But you haven't yet met him."

"No, but you've told me more about him than you think. Never mind that. I shall have some other people here, including some whom you may not like on your own account. Indeed, I expect to dislike some of them intensely myself. But this is to be a dinner with a purpose, and all these

people have something to say that I want to hear."

"I quite understand," said Stanfield. In fact, he did not understand at all, except that he knew the whimsicality of Miss Imboden's methods and was not surprised to learn that she was planning to use the ceremony of a dinner as a means of accomplishing some purpose of her own quite apart from the inanity of mere dinner giving. He took his leave at once, promising to be prompt in the evening.

XIV

TWO WOMEN

MISS IMBODEN had ways of her own in the doing of things. She never gave reasons for her methods, but she usually got the thing done that she wanted done.

No sooner had Stanfield gone than she went to the telephone. She had carefully noted the call that the doctor had given, — the number in round thousands that represented *The Universe* office, — and she called for that number again. Then she asked that Joe Blake should come to the telephone, and he did so.

“I am Miss Imboden,” she said to him over the wire. Joe started to respond with profuse protestations of his gratification, but she cut him short, as was her habit, and went on with what she herself had to say.

“You have accepted my invitation to dinner,” she said, “and that is quite enough of introduction

for a woman to presume upon. Quite incidentally I have learned that you are more or less interested in a Miss Gerard."

Blake here broke in with an attempted explanation, but she again cut him short, saying:—

"Never mind that; I approve your attitude. This dinner of mine is given with a purpose,—you'll see what purpose when you get here,—and the experiences of Miss Gerard, as I gather from Dr. Stanfield, whom you have employed to attend some member of her family in illness, are of a kind likely to aid my purpose. I want her as a guest at this dinner. Can you persuade her to come?"

For the first time in his life Joe Blake was overcome with embarrassment. "Certain things had happened — it wouldn't at all do for him to tell of them — which rendered it impossible for him — well —" At that point in his staggering effort to reply, Miss Imboden again interrupted him.

"Will you oblige me with her address?" she asked.

Joe did so on the instant, thankful to be rid of the necessity of explaining in a case in which he felt that he could not explain without "making a

cad of himself." By way of sparing him further embarrassment, Miss Imboden hastily said: —

"Thank you. I'll see you at dinner. Good-by." And with that she hung up the telephone receiver.

A minute later she went to the instrument again and called up a very fashionable caterer. To him she said: —

"I want you to send your people here — plenty of them — to prepare and serve a dinner for twelve at seven-thirty this evening. Let the menu be the best you can make it, and order an abundance of flowers. Yes, there is a large range and a grill; but there are no dishes here or glassware, and the supply of table linen is very small. You must send all such things. Let there be plenty of them, and everything of the best. If you send anything that doesn't please me, I'll dispute your bill. You understand?"

Apparently the caterer understood, and he gave all needed assurances that everything should be done in the best manner.

Then Miss Imboden entered her carriage, which stood at the door, and told her coachman to drive to the address which Joe Blake had given her as that of Miss Gerard.

The place was in a busy block in a thronged

avenue far uptown, where ground floors are thickly populated by small shopkeepers with most of their goods displayed upon the sidewalk, while above are cheap flats, two to the floor.

The entrance Miss Imboden sought, and to which a number of dirty and clamorously polite sidewalk urchins escorted her, was a narrow passage between an obtrusive green grocer's place and the darker den of a delicatessen dealer. There were four flights of dark stairs for Miss Imboden to climb before reaching the Gerard flat, but she was quick to observe that the stairs and hallways were far cleaner than they usually are in such buildings. That was perhaps because this was Miss Gerard's week for cleaning them, and Miss Gerard had exacting standards of cleanliness, which her neighbors, the other tenants, regarded as "hifalutin."

The apartment itself, when Miss Imboden reached it, was excessively small, with everywhere a suggestion of cramping for room. But it was exquisitely neat, and in some not easily definable way there had been given to it a certain touch of homelike refinement, a certain suggestion of good taste working with meagre means which mightily pleased the visitor.

There was no time, however, for her to spend in speculating about the matter. The flat was too small for that. It consisted of two very small rooms — the parlor and dining room — and a few mere closets, which served as kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping apartments. There was no possibility of privacy in the place, and so, when Miss Imboden asked for Miss Gerard, that young lady appeared at once. She had been busy over the typewriting machine, and she did not stay to make changes in her costume before answering the summons of her guest.

Miss Imboden, being a woman of infinite tact, did not delay to make known the purpose of her visit.

“I have come to ask a very great favor of you, Miss Gerard,” she began. “I am Miss Imboden. It happens that I am engaged in a rather active crusade against suffering among the poor on the East —”

“We are not subjects or objects of charity here, Miss Imboden,” broke in the proud girl, rising, as if to dismiss her visitor at once.

“Certainly not,” answered the older woman, with the utmost placidity, and quite ignoring the suggestion involved in Miss Gerard’s rising.

"Nothing could be further from my thought. I want your aid in directing my charitable work aright — no, I don't like to call it charitable work. It is relief work only. However, I'll explain all that to you when we get to know each other better, which I mean shall be very soon. You see, I've heard so much of you from my friend Dr. Stanfield and his friend Mr. Blake, though I haven't yet met Mr. Blake in person, that — there, dear, I've got myself tangled up in that long sentence and can't get out. What I mean is this: I have learned something of your qualities of mind and heart, and I want your advice. You know something of the condition of the poor, just as the Rev. Dr. Hatcher does, and as Dr. Field Stanfield and other friends of mine do. But your point of view is naturally quite different from theirs, as each of theirs is different from each of the other's. Now let me explain, dear. I am a very unhappy woman, with a terrible burden of duty on me, and I need all the help I can get — especially the help you can render me."

Instantly the girl's face changed. The hard expression of resentment seemed to drop out of it, and there came instead a look of compassionate interest and eager helpfulness.

"Let us go over by the window and talk," said the girl, glancing meanwhile at an old man, half stupefied with drink, who sat hovering over the steam radiator.

"Certainly, dear," answered Miss Imboden, "unless you would enjoy a drive instead. My carriage is at the door, and the horses are restless. They have had too little exercise of late, and I'm a bit sorry for them. Besides, it seems a pity to lose so beautiful and crisp a morning. Why can't we drive up Seventh Avenue and Jerome Avenue, and so on through Riverside Drive and the Boulevard Lafayette, and get a breath of fresh air while we talk? Come. Let us do that. Surely your typewriting will wait."

"But I have no fit costume for your carriage, Miss Imboden," said the girl.

"You've something that you wear in the street cars?" answered the other.

"Yes, of course —"

"Very well. That will do perfectly. You see, I am dressed very plainly in alpaca, and I have only a man's soft hat for my sky piece. Go and put on your best bib and tucker, child, and let us be off."

Ten minutes later the two entered the victoria

with a congregation of wild-eyed and admiring street urchins as their onlookers, and Miss Imboden gave the coachman the simple order: "Drive till I tell you to do something else. We want to talk."

Then, as the carriage, after half a mile through a cross street, turned into upper Seventh Avenue, she bade the coachman: "Drive slowly and avoid jolts. We want to talk."

"Let me tell you a little about myself, dear," she began. "I am the owner of more money than anybody has a right to keep. I'll tell you all about that after we learn to know each other and get chummy."

She choked a little and paused in her speech. Presently she said: —

"I loved my father and he is dead now. I have learned since his death that — well, that he ought not to have had all this money — you understand? I am trying to make atonement and restitution."

"I understand," said the girl. "You saw *my* father. Unfortunately, he is not dead yet. But I understand."

With that she took the other's hand in hers, and, leaning over, kissed her soothingly. After that the hands of the pair remained in close

embrace, and somehow the two women seemed to understand each other with few words.

"Thank you," said Miss Imboden, presently. "I don't know and I can never find out whom my father wronged or to whom I ought to make restitution. There is left to me only the chance to devote the millions to the service of others in the hope that the good God, if there is a good God, may accept that as the best atonement I can make for his sin. You understand, do you not, dear?"

"I understand. Go on."

"I am living not fashionably, but as expensively as I can, hoping, in that way, by employing many people, to pay back in the way of wages some of the ill-got gain. With the assistance of Dr. Stanfield and a dear girl named Winifred Fair, whom you are to meet to-night, — no, don't interrupt me — I'll tell you about that presently, — I am trying to do what work I can among the poor. But the millions yield so great an income that at the end of every year I have more than I had at the beginning. I must find other and larger ways of getting rid of my curse of money. Now let me explain. I have nothing to do with fashionable life. I live in a little apartment

fronting upon Central Park, because I like quiet living. But I keep a large house — more as an office than as a home — down near Stuyvesant Square, and there I am going to give a dinner to-night. It will be a costly dinner, because I simply must spend all the money I can in ways that mean wages to somebody. But it will not be a fashionable dinner. The company, indeed, will be very mixed. It will be composed of six men and five women, besides myself, each of whom has been chosen because he or she has some form of special knowledge with respect to human needs, some special knowledge that may aid me in forming plans to get rid of some of my money in ways that will do good and not harm. I especially want you to be one of the company, and you must.”

“But, Miss Imboden, I —”

“Yes, I know all that. You haven’t a proper gown, you mean. I’m glad of that. It gives me a chance to get rid of a little money in a way that will benefit some sewing women.” Then to the coachman she said: —

“Lewis, drive to Morrison’s — the dress-maker’s.”

Miss Gerard tried to protest, but Miss Imboden promptly cut her short: —

"Oh, you can return the gown to me if you simply won't accept it as your own, or you can give it to charity. It is simply that I must have you to-night — what's your first name, dear?"

"Deborah," the girl answered.

"Deborah! That's extremely nice. I'll call you that, now, if you don't mind. You see, I like you very much and I'm getting to be an old woman. Well, as I was about to say, I want you for dinner to-night and of course I shall set a plate before you and provide you with a napkin. In precisely the same way I am going to provide you with a costume, as one of the trifling material things necessary, just as the plate and the napkin are. Here we are at Morrison's, and we've no time to lose."

Impelled by the overmastering will of the older woman, and almost as if under hypnotic control, the girl accompanied her companion into the dressmaker's rooms, where an attendant almost effusively offered seats to "Miss Imboden and her friend." Obviously Miss Imboden was well known there.

"Ask Miss Morrison to see me at once," she said, and a moment later the presiding genius of the place swept into the room. Miss Imboden looked at her watch.

"It is just noon," she said. "My young friend, Miss Deborah Gerard, is to be one of my guests at dinner this evening. The dinner is set for seven-thirty. You are to get her gown ready and see it on her at my house not later than seven."

"But, Miss Imboden, that is impossible," broke in the dressmaker.

"Not at all. Send for all the sewing women you need — you have a long list that I gave you last week. Send cabs after them, if necessary. The gown must be in my house at six o'clock, and the last touches must be made not later than seven. Now what shall it be? It must be simple, but rich, and above all it must be becoming. I'll go after the goods myself as soon as we decide what it is to be."

Morrison made no further protest, perhaps because she remembered that it was Miss Imboden who had set her up in business, and furnished her with her first capital, and most of her customers. At any rate, it was quickly evident that Miss Imboden's word was law within those four walls.

There was a consultation, not hurried but rapid, as to stuffs and styles and trimmings. Then Miss Imboden with her companion drove away to the

shops to make the necessary purchases. On their return the elder woman said : —

“Deborah, you will want to send a note to your people, telling them that you will be detained with me till midnight. You can write it here. Morrison, have one of the girls ring for a messenger at once, please.”

Thus, with a promptitude of decision and a quiet imperativeness of command that would have become the admiral of a fleet in action, Miss Imboden proceeded to accomplish her purpose.

At seven o'clock Deborah Gerard stood dressed, and, as Miss Imboden said, “looking like a dream of simple beauty.”

“Do you always make people do what you want them to do in that fashion?” asked Deborah, with a little laugh, when the dressmaking women were gone and she was left alone with Miss Imboden.

“Always when I must. You see, child, people never know what they can do till they try.”

XV

JOE BLAKE'S PANIC

WHEN Miss Imboden hung up the receiver and cut short her telephonic conversation with Joe Blake, that ordinarily self-poised personage fell at once into something like panic. Hurrying back to the telephone booth, he called up Dr. Field Stanfield's office, but the answer was that Dr. Stanfield was out. Fifteen minutes later he called up again and was again told that the doctor had not returned. He asked therefore that the doctor should call him up "the moment he comes in," adding: —

"Tell him it's a life-and-death case, or something very like it."

A little after noon the doctor returned, and upon receipt of the message instantly called his friend. Joe wanted to talk with him in person, and to that end begged for a special appointment. Stanfield told him to come to his office at once, promising to await him there.

When the two friends met, Stanfield's face

showed something of anxiety, but that was due solely to the alarmingly uncertain character of Blake's message concerning "a life-and-death case." As soon as he looked at his friend his mind settled back into its usual calm, and he pushed a box of cigars forward, saying:—

"Go ahead, old fellow. What's the matter with Waggles?"

Waggles was Joe Blake's Boston bull-terrier, whose tail had been so far abbreviated as to extend only about an inch from his spine. Brief as the tail was, it was incessantly active in wagging signals of the dog's entire satisfaction with things as they are, and of his affectionate approval of whatever present company there might be. Hence the name.

"Oh, have your jest, of course," answered Blake. "But this thing is really serious, Stanny. And it isn't easy to tell you about it either, because—well, one doesn't want to play the cad or to seem one, and you know—confound it, don't smile in that superior way of yours, Stanfield, or I'll quarrel with you."

"I didn't mean to smile either in a superior or an inferior way, old boy; but I couldn't help thinking you were making too much of some

difficulty that is really trifling in itself. But I won't smile any more. Go on and tell me what the trouble is."

"Thank you. I'll do the best I can. Just after you talked with me over the 'phone this morning, your friend Miss Imboden called me up and wanted me to arrange things so that Miss Gerard should be one of her guests to-night. You remember Miss Gerard, that young stenographer whose chronically alcoholic father I asked you to visit —"

"Oh, yes, I remember her very well. She impressed me as a young woman of far more than ordinary refinement, culture, and intelligence, and — why shouldn't she be a guest on such an occasion? — it's going to be a wild-animal show, I suppose —"

"Well, she's not a wild animal or an exhibit of any kind," answered Blake, with a touch of feeling.

"Of course not, but she might enjoy seeing the menagerie."

"Possibly. I don't suppose she has a gown that comes within a mile of being fit to wear on such an occasion, and that's it. If I knew how to buy one, I'd send it to her anonymously, for

really the girl ought to see something of the world and get some little peeps out of the windows of her narrowly shut-in life. But that isn't what's bothering me. That imperious woman, your friend Miss Imboden, wouldn't wait for me to explain. When I tried to do so, she suddenly cut in with a demand for the young woman's address, and before I could think up any plausible prevarication, I gave it to her. Then she hurriedly said 'good-by' and hung up the receiver. I imagine she's going to arrange the matter in her own way."

"Very probably. She usually does manage things in her own way, and not only things, but people also. But what objection is there to that? I fancy that Miss Gerard will enjoy being there."

"I sincerely hope so. That isn't it. Damn it, Stanfield, you don't think me a cad, do you? And yet there are things I must say to you which will make you think so. You see when I first knew that girl she was in very pitiful straits, and I was awfully sorry for her. But it wasn't very easy to help her.

"You see, she's proud and womanly and all that sort of thing, so in order to help her at all I had to go about it very gingerly. I suppose

my sympathy showed itself in those little ways which women call 'delicate consideration,' and there is nothing in the world that appeals to a woman like that. Now — oh, damn it! I can't make you understand unless you try to understand without my telling you."

"I think I understand," answered Stanfield; "the young woman misinterpreted your delicacy of consideration, and thought you were making love to her."

"Oh, I could never accuse her of that. It would be contemptible in me to suggest such a thing. I only mean that after a while I began to see that I must change my methods a little, lest I should be misunderstood. It is this way: It would be a horrible thing to accuse a modest girl like that of having fallen in love with me without asking. But what if my attitude toward her and my conduct were such that she must interpret them as amounting to a suit for her love? There, that's the way to put it. I began to see that in my tender solicitude for her welfare, my anxiety to help her, and my courteous, deferential attitude toward her, I was in fact offering her, quite unintentionally, what she must construe as a declaration of love, or at least as a prelude to

such a declaration. Now you understand and you won't think me a conceited ass for thinking in that way, will you? You see, it isn't that I think she would take anything for granted in an unmaidenly way, but that I saw how my own conduct and manner might force some such interpretation upon her."

"I fully understand, I think," said Stanfield. "But why should you care? Even if you broke the girl's heart and caused her to jump into a dock some night, what difference would it make? Are there not billions of other people in the world, and isn't one woman more or less an atom of infinitesimal consequence? And as for yourself, are not you, too, merely one of these passing billions? What difference can it make in the general economy of the universe whether or not you carelessly or even wantonly break a woman's heart? What is the matter with your philosophy, Joe, that it doesn't come to your aid in a case like this?"

"Oh, damn my philosophy. Don't trifle. Let me go on with my explanation."

"Oh, as to that, I am ready enough to damn your philosophy. Heaven knows it is damnable enough. I am more interested to hear your explanation. Go on with it."

“Well, you see, when I saw this danger I took measures to avoid it. I very coldly told Miss Gerard that I should have no more work for her to do for some weeks or months to come. That was a lie, of course, for I had the manuscript of a novel just ready, and I very much wanted her to copy it for the printers. But I thought I could manage that, and of course I didn’t mean that the girl should be suddenly cut off from her little earnings. So I offered her services to a few of my friends in the office, and got them to send for her and employ her. They couldn’t afford it, of course; but they were glad enough to avail themselves of her services when I undertook to pay the bills. Then I got to thinking that I didn’t like to have her hacking about in that way among fellows who might or might not be courteous to her, and so I took my manuscript to my publisher and arranged to have him send it to her with a letter, asking her to copy it. I got up the letter myself and I think I did it rather cleverly. It started out by saying that Mr. Blake’s handwriting was so bad and illegible that they despaired of the printers getting the book approximately right; it went on to explain that as she had done a good deal of work for Mr.

Blake, they thought it probable that she was familiar with his writing, and wouldn't she see if she could make for them a fair, type-written copy, at her usual rates for copying. Then there was a postscript saying that as the task of reading Mr. Blake's manuscript was a difficult one, she might add ten or twenty per cent to her usual charge when she should render her bill.

"I thought the thing was very adroitly done, but it proved to be a clumsy device. The girl copied the manuscript and sent it back with no bill at all, but with a note saying that she was very glad, indeed, to interpret Mr. Blake's manuscript for printers so ill educated that they could not read his handwriting, which was by no means difficult. But, she added, Mr. Blake had been in so many ways a good friend to her that she could not think of accepting pay for a little service like that to him. She added a postscript in return, saying that as for the suggestion that she should add ten or twenty per cent to her bill on account of the altogether imaginary difficulty of deciphering Mr. Blake's handwriting, she thought she correctly interpreted it as an 'attempt on Mr. Blake's part to make her the recipient of alms.'"

"Served you right," said Stanfield. "You

ought to have recognized both the delicacy and the sagacity of the woman. But what did you do?"

"Well, it was the devil's own situation, and I had to meet it with something like a lie in Queen Elizabeth's interpretation of that word. You know she said that a lie is an intellectual device for meeting a difficulty. Well, I resorted to an intellectual device. Of course I couldn't let it go at that. I couldn't let that poor girl do all that work for nothing. So I took my publisher by the lapel of his coat and led him to a front window. Then I said to him, 'I'll bet you the amount of that girl's bill at regular rates that you can't read the name of the firm opposite, as it is painted on the big sign over the door.' He promptly took the bet and of course he won. Then I gave him my check for the amount and told him to go back to his desk and write to the girl, telling her that the job was his and not mine, and that he could not consent to accept the work without paying for it. I told him to put it strongly, and I guess he did. He's a good fellow, who doesn't stick at trifles in a good cause, and a few days later he showed me Miss Gerard's receipt for the money. I didn't ask him just

what he had written to her. I didn't care, and I suppose he didn't."

"That's a very interesting story," said Stanfield. "It so perfectly illustrates your philosophy and shows how resolutely you act upon your conviction as to the utter insignificance of human joy or sorrow. But what is it you want me to do now?"

"Why, you must get me out of this dinner engagement. You must give me a dose of apomorphine or something else that will send me to bed in a state of choleraic collapse. I simply must not meet Miss Gerard just now."

With that Blake nervously seized and lighted one of Field Stanfield's cigars, which he presently threw into the grate, as he had already done with five others.

"Listen to me, Joe Blake," said Stanfield, in the placidly firm tone that he always employed in giving his commands to patients. "This is the utterest kind of utter nonsense. There is no more reason why you should not meet Miss Gerard at dinner to-night than there is reason for not meeting me. Of course I cannot get you excused now, and if I could I wouldn't. It is nonsense, I tell you, and —"

“Well, at any rate, won’t you telephone to Miss Imboden and ask her not to assign me a seat by Miss Gerard’s side? She might do that, you see, as she thinks of the girl as a friend of my own, and I take it the several members of this dinner company are likely to be a good deal unacquainted with each other. Ask her to seat me as far from the girl as the length of the table will permit. Won’t you do that, Field?”

And he bit off the end of still another cigar.

“I don’t think I will do even that,” replied Stanfield. “Certainly I shall not unless you give me some better reason than any that I now know for doing so. No, don’t interrupt, and don’t throw your cigar away, but listen to me till I shall have finished. You and I will be the only young men at the dinner whom Miss Gerard has ever met. I am to be the guest of honor, and must take Miss Imboden in. In the natural order of things, Miss Gerard will be assigned to you, and she will enjoy the menagerie all the better for having a man whom she knows and trusts to talk with while she watches the animals feed. You’ve simply got to take her in, and there isn’t the ghost of a reason why you should not. But I’ll do this much for you. I’ll telephone

Miss Imboden and ask her so to seat us that Miss Gerard may be between you and me. Then if anything very alarming happens, I'll give you a hypodermic dose of hyoscyamine, and you can be put to bed. I don't promise to succeed in my effort to get things arranged in that way. Miss Imboden is a rather peremptory personage, and she has probably arranged the seating of her guests already. I shouldn't care to be the one to interfere with a too earnest pleading for a change in her arrangements. Shall I try my hand?"

"Yes, if you will."

Stanfield went to the telephone and fortunately found that Miss Imboden had just returned from the dressmaker's to the house in Stuyvesant Square. In answer to his message she said:—

"Mr. Blake is to be my vis-à-vis and preside over the other end of the table. He will take Winifred in to dinner. It is an unusual arrangement perhaps, but I have my reasons for it. I want you and him to talk to each other from opposite ends of the table, so that the rest shall hear and be drawn into the conversation. Tell him so. Good-by." And she hung up the receiver by way of indicating, diplomatically, that "the incident was closed."

"She doesn't say where Miss Gerard is to sit?" asked Blake, when Stanfield had reported the outcome of the conversation.

"No, and it doesn't greatly matter. There are to be only twelve people at dinner, and Miss Imboden evidently means that the conversation shall be general. There'll be little or no opportunity for personal buzzing, or even for little asides."

"Well, anyhow, it is a relief to know that I shan't have to take Miss Gerard in and talk mainly with her."

"You're a good deal of a donkey, Joe," said Stanfield, looking steadily into his friend's eyes.

"In what way?"

"Oh, in a considerable variety of ways; but I was thinking especially of your attitude of mind concerning this Miss Gerard."

"Well, what about that? I don't see —"

"Of course you don't. Love is blind, and you're in love with that girl."

"Do you really think so?" asked Joe, nervously chewing the end of his cigar.

"I was never more confident of a diagnosis in my life."

"Well, I'll think it over," answered the other, "and if I find you are even approximately correct in your interpretation of the symptoms, I'll sail for Europe on Saturday. I have some means, you know, apart from my work, and I can continue my strictly literary work in Europe as well as here. After all, I don't pressingly need the newspaper part of my income. Indeed, so far as I can now see, I'll have to do that. I think you are wrong in saying that I am in love with Miss Gerard; but it is beginning to be clear to me that I am in danger of falling in love with her."

"But why should you run away from that possibility? Why should you reckon it a danger? Miss Gerard is a thoroughly charming young woman, — refined, cultured, and exceedingly pleasing in her person, in her mind, and in her manners. She is modest, unassuming, and at times a trifle shy, but the more thoroughly you know her the more her personality commends itself. Why should you fear to fall in love with her? Why shouldn't you welcome the opportunity? Why shouldn't you marry her and make both yourself and her happy? There's her altogether unlovely father, of course, but he was

originally a gentleman, and at any rate he won't live long to bother either of you. He has soaked whiskey for years in the most destructive of all ways — that is to say, in secret and quietly. I don't suppose he was ever seen drunk by anybody else in his life, but he hasn't really been sober for a dozen years past. Alcohol has done its perfect work with him. It has robbed him of his moral character, and in the meanwhile it has utterly destroyed his physical constitution. I've examined him, you know, from head to heels, and I tell you he reminds me of Charles Lamb's jest when he said he had long ago used up his constitution and was living on his by-laws. But he has hardly any by-laws left now. His liver is cirrhoted beyond anything I ever knew in a man not actually dying. His kidneys have degenerated until they are nearly useless to him, and now his heart is affected to the immediate danger point. Unless you and she hurry up the nuptials, the funeral will come before the wedding."

While Stanfield was delivering this long speech, Blake sat loosely in his easy chair, with his arms hanging down, his legs relaxed, and his eyes intent upon the face of his friend. When Stanfield had finished, Blake seemed to pull himself

together. Then he rose, and taking the doctor's hand he said:—

“Thank you. Let me say to you that I shall not run away from the danger—that was a cowardly impulse—I will stay and fight it out. But what you suggest can never be. It would be *infamous* for me to win Deborah Gerard's love, and a *felony* for me to marry her. Good day. I'll see you at Miss Imboden's.”

XVI

JOE BLAKE LEADS THE CONVERSATION

MISS IMBODEN'S preconceived liking for Joe Blake was confirmed and strengthened by the half minute's conversation she held with him when he greeted her as his hostess before dinner. Miss Imboden was a woman of unusual quickness to perceive, to weigh, and to judge, and to such a woman Joe Blake was an open book. As he presently made place for the introduction of another guest, she inwardly congratulated herself upon the prospectively certain success of her scheme to make him lead the talk at dinner. But she said no word of this to him. She was too wise to do that. She knew that there is no such wet blanket upon brilliant talk as the feeling that one is expected to talk brilliantly. But to Field Stanfield she said aside: —

“Your friend Blake will set the table in a fer-

ment to-night, if not in a roar, and it is a ferment, not a roar, that I want."

"I'm seriously afraid," answered Stanfield, "that he may set your guests by the ears. He was with me for an hour this afternoon, and he's in one of his moods. He lighted and threw away the better part of a box of cigars while he sat with me. And as he left me he said something that I did not understand, except in so far as it showed him to be emotionally agitated far beyond the common. Heaven only knows what unconventional things he will say to-night, or in what exasperating way he will say them. I'm afraid that before your dinner ends your guests will be in arms against each other in a sort of intellectual riot."

"That is precisely what I want," answered the hostess. "I want their real opinions, not those that they have adopted for the occasion as views likely to be acceptable and not irritating. I want your friend to act as an irritant, and the more profoundly irritated he is in his own soul, the more delightfully irritating he is likely to be to the others. He is charming. If he fulfils my expectations to-night, I shall be tempted to call him delicious. But you are to help me stir

him up from time to time. You know all his sore spots."

The company consisted, besides the hostess and Stanfield, of five women and five men.

Blake had Winifred Fair on one side and Count Strephoff on the other. Strephoff was a polyglot personage of uncertain nationality and an enormous conceit of himself. He called himself a socialist, an anarchist, or a nihilist, according to the company he happened to be in. Before the dinner was half over and in answer to one of his utterances, Winifred said to him: —

"You are a champagne socialist — not a beer socialist."

"And precisely what do you mean by the distinction, my dear young lady?" he asked.

"Why, the beer socialist — I've met many of them on the East Side — wants everybody to come down to his low standards of living, so that all shall share alike in the world's goods and be alike. The champagne socialist wants everybody to be equal upon the higher plane that suits him, utterly ignoring the fact that there are not enough champagne, green turtle, and truffles to go round. The beer socialist is the more reasonable of the two, I think; but it seems to me

that both equally forget the most important factors in the problem."

"And what are they, do you think?"

"Why, education, refinement, taste, habit — all the things which create differences in the standards of desire." Suddenly the girl became conscious that she was "almost making a speech," as she afterward said, and she hesitated. "I don't think I can explain," she said, shrinking from further utterance.

"I think I can explain for you," said the Rev. Dr. Hatcher, farther up the table. He was a man everywhere known for his humor and beloved for his generous sympathy with all human joy and sorrow.

"Please do," pleaded the girl, with gratitude in her voice.

"Why, it is an excellent thought you have put forth, and the truth underlying it ought to be obvious, though, in fact, it is usually overlooked, especially by socialists, whether of the champagne or of the beer variety. You mean, Miss Fair, that there is a difference between a dead level and an equality, and that to require all men to live in the same way, each receiving precisely the same portion of the earth's products that each other

does, would not bring about equality of enjoyment, but a gross and unjust inequality. They tell a story of some sailors who complained to their captain that the ship's cook was giving them bad meat to eat. On investigation, the captain found that the meat complained of was a choice rib-roast from his own table. When he declared the fact, the spokesman of the crew answered:—

“‘We know that, Captain, and such meat is good enough for a man like you; but we want meat with some chaw in it.’ In the same way there are tens of thousands of people in this town who would prefer a platter full of corned beef and cabbage to the dainty dinner Miss Imboden has provided for us to-night. A turnip soup would please their palates better than the delicate green turtle we have drunk; the sweetbreads we have been eating would seem to them tasteless in comparison with a German sausage; and as for this exquisitely underdone canvasback duck, the multitude would utterly reject it as raw meat. It is the same with everything else. A clog dance means far more to the many than a lecture from an Emerson might. Our point of view leads us to prefer the lecture, but the majority prefer the clog dance. Rag-time music wins and

delights the multitude; while to those who applaud our friend Signora Mineola when she appears in grand opera, rag-time music is an offence."

"Oh, but rag-time is abominable in itself," said the Signora, — who, by the way, was born on Long Island of New England parents, — "and surely you do not mean to defend it, Dr. Hatcher."

"Oh, yes, I do, for those who like it. Their taste is as truly their right as your taste or mine is our right. That is the sort of music that gives them pleasure, just as what we rather arrogantly call a 'higher' order of music delights us. Why should a champagne socialism rob them of rag-time and inflict Chopin or Verdi or Wagner upon them, any more than a beer socialism should compel us to give up grand opera and the Boston Symphony Concerts, and listen to rag-time instead? That last is what would very certainly happen if we were all compelled, for the sake of a so-called social equality, to submit to the rule of a majority in the choice of our music, as we must under a rule of state socialism. The beer socialists outnumber the champagne socialists ten or a hundred to one, and upon a popular vote for music to be furnished by the state at

the public cost, rag-time would win overwhelmingly every time. Don't you think so, Mr. Blake? As a newspaper man, you know the people."

"I suppose so," answered Blake, glancing at Signora Mineola as if in challenge. "All music is unnecessary noise, and the exact measure of every human being's civilization is his tolerance or intolerance of unnecessary noise. Savages all over the world rejoice in noise for its own sake. The natives of Central Africa beat tom-toms and make all the noise they can, to the delight of their utterly savage souls. The red Indians of this country make noise the central feature and agency of all their jubulations. The Chinese rabble is entranced with the shrieking of a one-stringed fiddle. The pioneers of our own West were accustomed to express their joy and also to find their pleasure in whoopings and helloings that would drive a civilized human being crazy. The huckster in our city streets makes the most of life by taxing his voice to its utmost in advertising his wares, and on New Year's eve and at election time, and even at Thanksgiving, tens of thousands of well-dressed barbarians who account themselves civilized go about blowing fish horns and making all else

they can of harsh, discordant, nerve-racking noise. That is the expression of the surviving savagery of men. Music is the same thing modified. It is noise reduced to something akin to order and system, but still noise, and the impulse to rejoice in it is a purely savage impulse."

"But surely," broke in Signora Mineola, "you cannot mean that. You cannot —"

"But very surely I do," interrupted Blake.

"Then you deny the refining, cultivating influence of music?"

"Not at all. But what does it refine? What does it cultivate? To what does it minister except to the purely savage passions and animal desires of men? When a brutal brigadier-general wants his soldiers to do their bloody work of murder in the bloodiest and brutalest way, he sets the drums beating and the bands playing, perfectly knowing that the music, if it is 'spirited' enough, will stir the brute passions of his men to the utmost. When the keeper of a gambling house or dive of any kind wishes to lure victims, he sets his orchestra to unseat reason by an appeal to the senses and to make reckless fools of men who might otherwise take counsel of their judgment. Even the law recognizes that by forbidding

music in certain places where it lures to vice. Music is always and everywhere an appeal to the senses, and through them to the emotions — never an appeal to reason or to the calm judgments of men. We hear a great deal of talk about the thought underlying music and communicated by it. But it has no thought, and it is utterly incapable of conveying an idea or even of suggesting one. It is purely sensuous, and often it is even sensual. It induces a species of drunkenness, in which the reason is unseated and the victim is for the time being a madman. And like all other drunkennesses, indulgence in it soon induces a habit to which the most precious interests of life are sometimes ruthlessly sacrificed. That sort of disaster happens in an observable way only in extreme cases, of course, just as it is only in extreme cases of drunkenness that men abandon their families to want, or fall to beating their wives. But short of those extremes the tendency is the same, and the harm done differs from that suggested in degree rather than in kind."

The entire company was by this time staring at Joe Blake in open-eyed astonishment — all but Winifred, who thought she had seen reason

to believe that his statements, though extreme and perhaps even extravagant, were founded on truth.

"The barbarian!" exclaimed Signora Mineola to her next neighbor at table.

"But surely you would not include church music in your sweeping condemnation?" said Father Funston, who was known to all the company as a Roman Catholic priest who was apt to be in frequent trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities because of his liberality of sentiment and conduct as exhibited in his efforts to lift men and women up into a better life by unusual and unsanctioned means. In aid of such endeavor he had spent a fortune of his own in charitable work, and also in aid of it he had made himself prominent and active in certain very radical, political, and social movements condemned by his superiors. He was a man of large intelligence, and larger wisdom, and still larger generosity of soul.

"But why not?" asked Blake.

"Why, all the world is agreed as to the grandeur and dignity of church music and as to its influence in inducing the devotional frame of mind."

"Yes, but what is the devotional frame of mind?"

Is it not one in which the reason abdicates and the emotions assume the government of the man? Is not the appeal of the very grandest church music made to the senses alone? Is not its sole purpose to excite emotion? Does it argue anything, explain anything, analyze anything? Does it make any appeal whatever to those faculties of the mind which we all agree ought to control every rational creature? Is it not its sole effort and purpose to soothe those faculties to sleep, to hypnotize them, to drug the mind into submission to the emotions and exact from it an unreasoning and only half-conscious assent to dogmas that in its natural state it might question and perhaps reject?

“But pardon me. I didn’t mean to usurp attention in this way. Let us talk of something else. Miss Imboden, you have managed, I learn, to get Stanfield mightily interested in your work of relieving the physical sufferings of the sick poor. I am glad to observe, however, that in his devotion to the ministry you have set for him he has not quite lost his interest in the sufferings of people who are not poor. There lies a common mistake. In my observation the need of the comparatively well-to-do is far more severe and

more pressing than that of the very poor, and yet nobody thinks of ministering to it."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand your meaning," said Dr. Hatcher. "Would you mind explaining, or, better still, illustrating?"

"Not at all," answered Blake. "A few years ago I was the editor-in-chief of an afternoon paper. I was allowed a very limited sum of money each week with which to make the paper. I had to keep all salaries down and employ as few men as I could possibly get on with. One day there came to me a man whom I knew as a successful author. That is to say, he had published two books of exceedingly clever essays, which the critics had united in praising far beyond their usual wont. I had thought of the man as one who had graduated from journalism into the higher literary life. He came to me in search of employment. I told him I had nothing that I could offer him — nothing worthy of his attention. He turned to me presently and said very earnestly: —

"'Any honest work is worthy of my attention. I am the victim of a small reputation. Everybody thinks I would scorn humble work because I have done better things. Everybody hesitates

to offer me small wages because everybody thinks I would scorn any but high pay. In the meanwhile, I am actually starving.'

"I said in reply: 'I am absolutely powerless to offer you anything except a place at twelve dollars a week. Surely, you would not consider that?'

"'Gladly, eagerly!' he answered, and then I saw how cruelly he must have suffered, and it set me thinking, inquiring, investigating, till I am convinced that the greater part of the poverty that suffers is not to be found among those whom we call the poor, but among those whom we regard as comparatively well-to-do. You see, I think we ought to revise our definition of poverty.

"In my bachelor rooms I keep a refrigerator. I buy ice from an Italian who rents a cellar near me and peddles ice, coal, and kindling wood. His profits are exceedingly small, but they greatly exceed his wants, and three of him in succession have saved enough money out of those little penny profits to go back to Italy and live in what they regard as luxury, on the interest of a little hoard of five hundred dollars or so. We should regard the conditions of these returned ones, if we had to live in them, as a state of abject poverty. And

while accumulating that little hoard, Nicola P — that's what each of him in succession has called himself — has slept on a bundle of rags in his cellar as comfortably, or at least as contentedly, as if his stone-paved closet had been the most sumptuous apartment in the Waldorf Astoria. What I mean is that poverty is not to be measured by any absolute reckoning of means, but solely by a comparison of means with desires. While Nicola P has rejoicingly dreamed, on his bundle of rags in a damp cellar, of the time when his steadily growing hoard of pennies would enable him to return to his native land as a capitalist and lie idly in the sun, with macaroni enough to satisfy his appetite — while Nicola P has thus been rejoicing in his accumulating wealth, many a woman of what we call the well-to-do class has had to weep salt tears over her inability to accept an entrancing invitation because of her inability to buy a suitable hat or a fit pair of shoes. Many a man commonly accounted sufficiently prosperous to submit with a laugh to Nicola P's little extortions has spent sleepless nights worrying over his inability to pay for his wife's proper gowns or to meet the bills incurred in keeping his children fitly dressed for school."

"How, then, would you define poverty?" asked Father Funston.

"Negatively," answered Blake, "I should say that no man is poor whose means enable him to secure all the things without which he must endure suffering; and no man is rich who, for lack of means, must go without things that are necessary to his happiness. Affirmatively, I should say that every man is rich whose income or earning capacity supplies him with all that he imperatively needs for his comfortable living, whether his need be of Frankfurter sausages and sauerkraut or of terrapin à la Newburg; whether his need embraces and includes a back room in a tenement house or a Fifth Avenue apartment at Sherry's, a gallery ticket at Keith's, or an opera box. The whole thing comes down to this: If a man is able to have what he wants, he is rich, even though there are many other things utterly beyond his reach that he does not particularly care for; while if a man has not the means with which to provide for his wants, he is poor, even though the wants unprovided for are an opera box, a steam yacht, and an automobile."

"Well, now," said Miss Imboden, "I want you to tell us, if you don't mind, why you swore over

the incident of little Johnny's breeches. Miss Gerard, who was present on that occasion, has told me of the incident. I believe she even had to take down your profanity and transmit it in company with your money contribution."

Joe Blake shrank into himself like a criminal detected in the act and caught with the goods on him. "I didn't think Miss Gerard would give me away in that fashion," he said.

"Miss Gerard has not given you away at all," interrupted Miss Imboden. "She told me the story in entire confidence, and it is I who am violating the confidence. I have my own reasons for doing so, and I take all responsibility. Go on and tell us why you swore."

"Well, as the sin is on your head and not on Miss Gerard's, I will explain. The story of little Johnny's breeches appeared in the evening edition of *The Universe*. It related that little Johnny had his first breeches in sight when some infernal ghoul who does business on 'the instalment plan' entered the house and, for lack of some payment, took little Johnny's first breeches in pawn. Little Johnny had been promised those first breeches for his birthday. He had eagerly looked forward to the hour when

he should put them on. To him their possession meant all that wealth could imply — the lack of them all that is possible and all that is miserable in poverty. The greedy rich man seized them by way of enforcing his demand this week instead of waiting till next week for its satisfaction. The man must be paid, or Johnny must go without his promised first breeches on his birthday. When I read the story, as it was graphically set forth by one of the women reporters for *The Evening Universe*, my sympathies were all with Johnny. His birthday was only two days off, and there was no time to lose. The claim upon Johnny's mother was for five dollars. So I enclosed a five-dollar bill in a note to the city editor, which I dictated to Miss Gerard because I had a lame right hand. In the note I said, 'Damn a system that permits a thing of this sort,' or something of the kind — I don't remember the exact terms; but, anyhow, I used the swear word, because I have a bad habit of swearing when I feel strongly."

"If I may offer the expert opinion of a clergyman," said Dr. Hatcher, "I quite absolve you from the sin of swearing. I join you most heartily in the sentiment, 'Damn a system that permits such a thing.'"

Instantly Father Funston rose, and, in his rich singing voice, started the chorus in which all the company heartily joined, to the tune of "America."

"So say we all of us;
So say we all of us;
So say we all,
So say we all of us,
So say we all of us,
So say we all of us,
So say we all."

XVII

THE CONVERSATION BECOMES GENERAL

JOE BLAKE shamefacedly bowed his thanks, and set to work to change the current of the conversation.

“The case was only one of many, illustrative of my point that poverty is not to be measured by the amount of one’s possessions or income or earnings, but solely by the extent to which people are denied the things they very greatly desire. Now the great majority of those whom we regard as the extremely poor have, in fact, pretty nearly all they want. They have food enough, of the kind they like. They have roofs over their heads, and even if these happen to be cellar roofs, they are better than the people sleeping under them have ever been used to in their lives. They have clothes that are better and sweeter-smelling than the fœtid sheepskins they wore in Russia and warmer than the calicoes that served them in Italy before they came hither. More

important still, they have a chance to better themselves. There are schools for their children, every one of whom may make what he can out of himself. They can earn more here than they could ever have earned in the oppressive lands of their birth. They are not the poor, I tell you. If they are sick or fall victims to any accident, there are hospitals open to them where they may receive the attention of the most eminent surgeons and physicians of the city without charge, together with the most expert of trained nursing, and the best possible of cookery and feeding. Then again there are Miss Imbodens and Dr. Stanfields in this city. Neither Miss Imboden, who was utterly unknown to me until this morning, nor Dr. Stanfield, who is as close-mouthed as any bass drum in any orchestra, has ever told me of the work they two are doing. Neither has Miss Winifred Fair, who sits by my side and who is an important factor in that work. But when Miss Imboden's invitation came to me this morning I accepted it, and then I set a detective reporter to find out who and what Miss Imboden was, and what her peculiar work might be.

"Through him I learned all I wanted to know of Miss Imboden's work and of Dr. Stanfield's

agency in it. Frankly, it seems to me, in the main, an unnecessary, a superfluous work, a work misdirected and tending to pauperize those to whom it ministers. It is a hoodwinked groping in blind alleys that have no outlet."

At this every member of the company seemed aghast, except Miss Imboden, Field Stanfield, and Winifred Fair. These three accepted the condemnation quite as if they had been expecting and were prepared for it. Winifred was the first to speak, and she spoke to the purpose.

"We have felt all that you say, Mr. Blake, for a good while past. But we have not known how to give a better direction to our work. We have not known the way out of the blind alleys. Tell us, please, in order that we may do better."

"But I cannot tell you," answered Blake, with some heat. "I can only say, as I said before, that it is all a blind alley — that the poverty to which you are ministering is really not poverty at all. You cannot minister to real poverty — the poverty that suffers — because it will not submit itself to your ministry. You cannot affront an apparently well-to-do woman by offering her the bonnet or the gown or the shoes for lack of which she must deny herself the pleasure

of attending social functions that would minister mightily to her happiness and culture. She would angrily resent the offer of such a service, no matter how adroitly the offer might be made. In fact, I doubt that helpful charity is possible in a country like ours, in which every man and every woman who cares to earn a living can do so."

"But how about little Johnny's breeches?" queried Father Funston. "Surely in that case —"

"Oh, that was an exceptional case," interrupted Blake. "It lay quite outside the general rule, and such cases, when they come to one's knowledge, may be relieved, of course. But broadly speaking —"

At that point Deborah Gerard deliberately interrupted him.

"Permit me to interrupt you, Mr. Blake," she said. "In a general way, of course, you are right. It is dangerous to attempt charitable work on a large scale among the very poor. There is the danger of pauperizing them and teaching them to depend upon charity for the support that they ought to win by their own work instead. And there is the greater danger that nine-tenths of the money given in charity will

go to the unworthy, the dishonest, the already pauperized class, and, as you say, it is difficult to offer relief to the really poor who are handicapped by the necessity of maintaining an appearance of dignity and independence. That is a peculiarly blind alley. And yet you, and men like you, and women like Miss Imboden, manage now and then to meet even that difficulty with generous minds and ingenious brains. I wish to say to the company that I personally know something of the class Mr. Blake has described, and I am going to tell 'the secrets of my prison house.' One day a young woman went to the office of *The Universe* in search of work. The work was offered her, but because of her anxious nervousness she could not do it. One after another of the gentlemen there tried her and found her wanting. Then Mr. Blake tried her. She told him of her failures, but he dismissed them with a 'damn' so cordial and hearty, as it were, that it gave her new courage. Then he proceeded to dictate in a way that gave her more courage, so that she could take his dictation easily and accurately. She felt that he was a friend, and that counted for much."

At this moment Joe Blake slipped away from

his place at the table, and a little later Miss Imboden received at the hands of a servant a note from him asking her to excuse him, on the ground that he was really very ill, or feared he was going to be. "Don't let anything break up your party," he wrote, "but when the evening is quite over, please ask Stanfield to call on me at my rooms."

Miss Imboden, in genuine alarm, passed the note over to Stanfield, and asked if he had not better go at once to his friend.

"Not at all," answered the young doctor. "I know what's the matter with him, and it will keep till midnight or later."

Then Miss Gerard continued: "I needn't go into details. Mr. Blake enabled that girl to do her work, and he gave her work to do, till she had good shoes on her feet, a decent gown on her back, and enough of confidence in herself — the thing she most imperatively needed — to enable her to earn her living. Never once or for one moment did he permit her to think she was receiving charity at his hands, though at the outset she was far poorer than most of those are who receive charity with calm minds.

"I cite all this to show that it is possible for

the compassionate mind to minister to that suffering which Mr. Blake holds to be the only real poverty. The case I have referred to, and that of little Johnny and his breeches, are only illustrative. I know nothing of Mr. Blake's history, but I venture the assertion that if it could be written it would include many cases of precisely such generous response to a human need that organized charity could not possibly meet."

With that the girl ceased to speak, with a look that amounted almost to horror upon her face, until Miss Imboden said a word of thanks to her, and Field Stanfield crossed to the other side of the table, took her hand warmly in his own, and said:—

"Thank you, and thank God for such a woman as you!"

"No," she answered quickly. "Thank God that such men as Joe Blake live in a world that so badly needs them."

At that moment Miss Imboden spoke a word or two to Stanfield in an aside. He turned to the company and said:—

"The criticism we have heard is instructive, but it is not constructive. It tears down, but it does not build up. It shows us the weakness of

our endeavors, but it makes no suggestion of a better way. Now I should like to hear some helpful suggestions. Let us suppose the case of a man or woman in possession, by virtue of inheritance, of more money than its possessor thinks it right for any human being to hold. Let us suppose, too, that the person having these millions has reason to believe that they were not honestly got by the father from whom they were inherited. Let us suppose, further, that it is impossible for that person to find out from whom the millions were dishonestly taken in the bewildering processes of high finance. What can such a person do? In what way can he return the money to humanity in the hope that God may accept the return as an atonement? I am going to poll the company on that head and ask for opinions. Mr. Blake, who has more opinions than most people, has been compelled to leave us temporarily, but he will return presently, and we shall hear from him. In the meanwhile, we will discuss the question among ourselves, if you please. What think you, Signora Mineola?"

Before the Signora could begin her reply, Miss Imboden hurriedly asked Stanfield why he thought Blake would return, and he answered:

"I've sent him a note. It was for that purpose that I left the table a little while ago. You see what Miss Gerard told was simply the story of his generous treatment of herself. Blake can take all kinds of rough knocks without flinching, but that sort of thing regularly knocks him out. I've sent him a note, telling him it's all over and ordering him to return at once on pain of your sore displeasure and my own. He'll be back, you may be sure, and he'll look as shame-faced as if Miss Gerard had been exposing a crime of his commission. But the Signora is speaking."

"It seems to me," said the Signora, "that the very wisest use such a person could make of his money would be to endow the drama, and especially the music drama. I cannot think of any other way in which the money could be made to do so much good in the way of educating and refining the people."

"Do you mean," asked Father Funston, "that he should set up theatres and opera houses, in which seats should be free to all, the actors and singers being paid from the endowment fund?"

"Certainly. Why not? It would place art upon a basis of independence. It would free

artists from the insufferable tyranny of managers whose souls are utterly commercial."

"That is to say," said Joe Blake, who had quietly slipped into his seat, "the opera singer and the actor would get their salaries by favor and not upon merit. The commercialism of the managers is narrow enough to deserve condemnation, but at any rate it tends to soundness. They refuse to pay a thousand dollars a night or a thousand dollars a week to any singer or actor who doesn't honestly earn the money, while if a board of eleemosynary managers had the say, 'pull' would count for more than merit. Such an endowment as you suggest, Signora, would minister to the rapid deterioration of art. And then think of the unfairness of it all. All the unendowed theatres would go to pot at once, and a multitude of very capable and very deserving people would be thrown out of employment in order that a few might be overpaid for their exertions. I cannot imagine anything that would work greater harm than an endowed and free-seated theatre."

Again the Signora bitterly ejaculated "The barbarian!" to her elbow companion, who happened to be Father Funston.

"Oh, I don't know," returned the priest. "Commercialism seems to me a sort of continuous competitive examination which on the whole produces excellent results. But listen."

Mrs. Brantley was beginning to express her opinions. Mrs. Brantley's opinions were always admirably positive, at any rate, and they commended themselves to her own mind as indisputable. Mrs. Brantley was a noted advocate of "reform" for its own sake. She was active in the W. C. T. U. She was president of a "Purity League" that mightily ministered to impurity by continually discussing the subject, and in that way thrusting it upon attention. On this occasion she began to talk of that subject, but Miss Imboden managed to silence her by a frown and a word of suggestion, to the effect that there were young women present, and Joe Blake looked his thanks to his hostess for the interruption. The woman seemed specially to irritate Joe — a fact in which Miss Imboden greatly rejoiced. When she was checked in her impure discussion of "purity," she began talking of charity, which she uniformly called "Christian charity," assuming that all tenderness of sympathy and all humane impulses were the exclusive fruit and possession

of the religion she professed. There was a Jewish philanthropist present — Ferdinand Sigmund — who, as everybody present knew, was spending a fortune every year in providing the poor with coal and in furnishing the people carefully sterilized milk at a nominal price that did not pay even the cost of sterilization. Joe Blake was right therefore in thinking that Mrs. Brantley's assumptions were false and offensive. When she paused long enough to give him a chance of interposition, he asked: —

“But precisely what do you mean by Christian charity, Mrs. Brantley?”

“Why, the charity that pities all the sorrows of humanity and ministers to them tenderly and mercifully.”

“But why do you call that ‘Christian’ charity?”

“Why, because it reflects the spirit of Christ, and is the direct outgrowth of the teachings of the Christian religion.”

“There I challenge your facts. The good Samaritan, whom Jesus of Nazareth commended as he commended no other human being in all his utterances, never heard of Christianity or its teachings. Yet his acts were of the most gener-

ously humane, charitable, and merciful kind. And in our own time and town the most conspicuously well-supported charities of all, the only ones that never ask aid of the public authorities or need such aid, are those maintained by the Jews. I believe our Jewish friends are narrow-minded enough" — he bowed to Ferdinand Sigmund as he said this — "to insist upon themselves contributing all the funds that support those charities; but as for the mercy to be shown, that is as free as the wind to all human beings, whatever their race or color or creed may be. Their need is the only thing considered at all. There are Christian charities equally liberal, I do not doubt, but none can be more so, and therefore it seems to me that you distinctly bear false witness against your neighbor when you assume that charity is an exclusively Christian virtue."

"Tell us why you feel so strongly on that subject, Blake," interposed Stanfield. "You told me once, and I think the explanation may interest the company."

"Oh, as to that, I never feel strongly on any subject. I do not allow myself to do a thing so weak-minded and unworthy. But if you mean to ask how my attention happened to be called

to the subject, I don't mind explaining. You see some years ago I was editing a newspaper, and a case arose requiring immediate money for the relief of human suffering of the most painful sort. I stated the case. I asked for the money and the money came, instantly and gladly contributed. I printed an acknowledgment, giving the names of the contributors with the amounts of their several contributions. There came to me presently a letter. How well I remember it! I could quote every comma of it accurately now. In it the writer declared it to be his purpose to 'improve this opportunity' to show what Christianity had done by way of 'awakening the human instincts of men.' From first to last he treated this generous outpouring of money for the relief of human suffering as what he called 'Christian charity.' I printed his letter, but as a matter of curious human interest I analyzed the subscription list. I showed that a fraction over seven-tenths of the total amount had been contributed by Jews, known to me to be such; a considerable percentage of the remainder had come from agnostics and mere pagans like myself. I suggested that perhaps, in this case at least, the charity shown was not properly to be

called by any given name, except 'human,' and that possibly the generous desire to relieve human distress and suffering was not the exclusive possession of any creed or church or race."

"What happened?" asked Stanfield.

"Well, my correspondent asked for the return of his contribution, explaining that he was unwilling to give the money to any cause that did not represent the religion he loved. Of course he was an exceptionally narrow-minded idiot, and not at all representative; but Mrs. Brantley's use of his favorite expression, in a way to suggest his point of view, prompted me to challenge an assumption that seems to me grossly unjust and misleading."

At the end of this utterance, Mrs. Brantley was obviously disposed to share Signora Mineola's opinion that Joe Blake was a "barbarian," but she could not bring herself, even in the cause of truth, to recognize the righteousness of any thought or sentiment emanating from a person of the Signora's profession. For had not Mrs. Brantley stoutly and consistently taught that the theatre is, as she called it, "the gateway of hell"?

The table talk went on, until at last somebody quoted Dr. Howard Crosby's saying that "nine-

tenths of the poverty that suffers is directly due to drink."

Thereupon Winifred asked, "But what of that?" And when Mrs. Brantley tried to explain that instead of wasting compassion upon those who suffer from drink, we should devote our energies to the work of preventing drink, Winifred gently suggested her own philosophy.

"How can they help it?" she asked. "Isn't it a disease like any other? And even if it isn't, how can those poor creatures help the fact that they are born with weak wills and strong appetites? It seems to me we should pity rather than condemn them."

Instantly Mrs. Brantley was up in arms.

"I am surprised to hear you say such things, Miss Fair. I had loved to think of you as one engaged in the work of reform and of Christian charity, — for I refuse to accept or even to respect the purely pagan opinions of Mr. Blake, — and it is a grief to me to find in you an advocate and apologist of the very sins you ought to be engaged in combating."

At this point Winifred's face took on a look of consternation, almost of terror, and Father Funston, recognizing it, interrupted the voluble Mrs. Brantley.

"Pardon me," he said, "but if I correctly understand the matter in discussion between you, Mrs. Brantley and Miss Fair, it is not personal at all but purely scientific, and we have only one guest present who is sufficiently instructed in the scientific aspects of the matter to be entitled to express an opinion on the subject. I suggest an appeal to Dr. Stanfield."

There was a little clapping of hands in response — a clapping of hands that meant a general rejoicing in the rescue of Winifred Fair from the oratorical excoriation that Mrs. Brantley — hardened debater as she was — was about to give to the girl.

Stanfield was quick to take up the theme.

"In common with all educated physicians who have given earnest attention to physiology and pathology," he began, "I must agree with Miss Fair in regarding the habit of drinking as often at least a pathological condition. It is probably true that the thirst for alcohol is sometimes inherited. It means a peculiar nervous diathesis in which the craving for alcoholic stimulation is so great that the person so afflicted cannot, or at least does not, resist it. Once yielded to in such a case, this craving grows, as other appetites do,

by what it feeds upon, until moderate indulgence creates an irresistible desire for immoderate indulgence. In the meanwhile one of the first effects of alcohol — like the first effect of opium — is to weaken the will and with it the power of resistance to the craving. There is some difference of opinion among physiologists as to whether the appetite for alcohol is hereditary or not. We needn't discuss that. The fact, known to all physicians who have any brains at all, is that addiction to alcohol, whether inherited or acquired, is apt to become a disease."

Here Mrs. Brantley felt that her propagandist toes were being trampled upon, and she interrupted: —

"Then, Doctor, you mean to excuse men for deliberately drinking whiskey and making drunkards of themselves? You make yourself the apologist —"

"Pardon me," he responded. "I do not think I have said anything that would bear that construction. I do not think that any man should drink whiskey, or any other form of alcoholic liquor. I never do so myself. But I know many men to whom abstinence — a thing very easy to me — is exceedingly difficult. In

the same way, I know many men whose livers are out of order, as mine, fortunately, is not."

"But do you prescribe alcohol in your practice?"

This was precisely what Field Stanfield had wanted. The "fight" had been transferred from Winifred to himself, and he was ready for it.

"Certainly, I do. So does every other physician. There are cases in which it would be criminal to do otherwise."

"What sort of cases?" the woman asked snappishly, almost angrily.

"There are several sorts," he replied, with calm deliberation. "In cases of collapse, as every physician knows, the conditions are sometimes such that the administration of alcohol is absolutely necessary to save life. In treating the anæmic children of the tenement houses, we sometimes find it necessary to add a few drops of brandy to the food of an infant."

"Then you begin to manufacture drunkards in the cradle," exclaimed Mrs. Brantley, fiercely.

"That is your way of putting it," the doctor answered. "I think few physicians would accept your interpretation. It is possible, however, that the physicians are wrong, and that you know

more about the matter than they do. We can only be guided by such knowledge as we have of physiology and pathology. All higher knowledge is denied to us. Without citing other cases in which we find the administration of alcohol necessary, let me say in a more general way, that I do not think any man in ordinary health is ever the better for a drink."

"Then you never prescribe liquor for a well man?"

"I never did but once. And I do not regret that, as it saved some scores of human lives, and did no particular harm to the man who took the liquor."

"Tell us the story," said Miss Imboden, who was beginning to long for an end to the discussion.

"It isn't much of a story," Stanfield answered, "though if my friend Mr. Blake had the telling of it, his literary art would perhaps make something of it. I can only state the facts."

And he proceeded to do so.

XVIII

THE STORY FIELD STANFIELD TOLD

THIS is the story Field Stanfield told. Let it be related as he told it, without the embarrassment of complex quotation marks:

A few years ago, when I had completed my hospital service and before I went abroad for post-graduate study, I had a business occasion to visit a college town on one of the Great Lakes. There I found an old college classmate of my own, Dick Wentworth, engaged as a tutor in the University. He and I had never been particularly intimate, but I liked him as a robust, manly fellow, and we renewed our acquaintance of four years before with mutual satisfaction. In college, Dick Wentworth had been a failure at foot-ball. At base-ball he had been discarded from the Varsity nine as a "butter fingers." At other field sports he had made only an indifferent showing — neither very good nor particularly bad. But as a swimmer he had been

without any rival good enough to be called second to him. We used to call him the champion cross-country swimmer, because he rejoiced in long distances and difficult water. A five miles' swim seemed to him as nothing. A rough sea rather tempted than appalled him. It was a discouragement to all other swimmers, indeed, that their best was mere child's play to Dick Wentworth's ordinary.

One morning, soon after I arrived in the lakeside college town, all the bells were set ringing a furious alarm, and word was promptly passed from mouth to mouth that the great passenger steamer for Chicago had gone ashore on the sand reefs in front of the little town.

The whole population was speedily gathered on the shore, and it was truly a pitiful scene that confronted us. The sea was running mountain high. There was the remains of a fog on, and the spray from the madly incoming surf additionally obscured our vision. But through it all we could see the great steamer, out there half a mile from shore, heavily listed and suffering such a pounding of the waves above and the sands beneath as no ship of mortal make could long endure. Every oncoming wave lifted the great,

helpless hulk, and, receding, dropped her thousands of tons of weight upon the sands. The sea was already breaking over her, and now and then fragments of wreckage came ashore to tell us of the damage she was suffering. In two or three cases there was a human body lashed to the wreckage, showing in what spirit of despair the people out there on the stranded ship looked upon their situation.

There was a life-saving station at the place, and its crew was strongly reënforced by volunteers from the student body of the college. But the exertions of these life savers proved to be futile. One after another they had sought to launch their boats, only to have them cast back upon the shore in the condition of pulp.

It was then that Dick Wentworth came with half a dozen balls of strong, light twine in his hands and called me to his aid.

"Here, Stanfield," he said, "I want you to pay this twine out — you know how. There mustn't be an extra feather's weight of resistance — it might mean failure. Let somebody stand by to fasten each ball of the cord to the next, as each is used up. Look out and don't let them tie any granny knots that may slip."

"What are you going to do?" I asked in amazement.

"I'm going to carry a line to that stranded ship," he answered, "if God gives it to me to do so."

"But it is impossible!" I remonstrated.

"It may be so. I don't know," he said. "I can only try. Look to the cord, old fellow, and don't let a snarl drown me before I get there."

Then he went to the old president of the college, who was standing there bare-headed, in reverent awe of the storm and of its Maker. To him he said hurriedly:—

"Please send the women away for a little space. I must strip to the buff—a pair of breech tights weighs several ounces when wet, and the merest fraction of an ounce of needless weight may make all the difference between success and failure in a case like this."

That old man had been a swimmer in his youth, and all his life he had been a man who worshipped duty. He saw what Dick Wentworth's purpose was, and while he had only the remotest hope of his success, his sympathy with that purpose was strong. He ordered the women to retire up and down the beach, and Wentworth hurriedly

stripped off his clothing. He coolly and carefully adjusted the twine to his person, and then held out his hand first to me and then to the president.

"God bless you, my son," said the venerable man, "and may He crown your merciful endeavor with success. If in His wisdom He permits you to suffer death in failure, be very sure that in the eternal end all will be well. Go now to the duty you have so bravely chosen."

In the meanwhile a company of students had been bringing timbers and boards from a neighboring lumber yard, in obedience to Dick Wentworth's request. And now, as coolly as if he had been a stage athlete preparing to do a "stunt," he directed the hurried construction of a spring-board. A minute sufficed. Then, gathering a coil of the slack of the twine in his left hand, Dick Wentworth leaped from the spring-board into the upper part of an incoming curler. It was his hope, by virtue of the impetus of the spring-board, to dive through the oncoming wave and come to the surface beyond, but the force of the wave proved to be too much for him. Three times he made the attempt. Three times he was hurled back upon

the beach with a violence that imperilled his life itself.

In the meanwhile the gale was blowing severely cold from the northeast, and drenched as he was, I saw that Wentworth was in danger of losing his strength through chill. I went to him and begged him to give up the attempt. His answer came quick and sharp:—

“Not until I am dead or those poor people out there are saved.”

Then he turned to the students and gave some orders for a change in the spring-board. They set to work to make it at once, and meanwhile he said to me:—

“I see I can’t dive through that first wave. I must manage to jump clear over it. Ugh, I am so cold!”

I called a dozen stalwart students and bade them slap his flesh into a glow again. Then, just before he made his next, supreme, and probably fatal attempt, I gave him two ounces of brandy, and ordered him to swallow it.

With the lengthened spring-board to aid him, he watched his chance. As the next incoming wave approached he ran and, with a mighty leap, cleared its crest, falling into the surf beyond.

For a time the result was in doubt, though a thousand anxious eyes were watching and waiting. Among those eyes were one pair belonging to the young woman who was plighted to be Dick Wentworth's wife. She stood very near me, because, as she afterward explained, I was his nearest friend, and to my care he had committed his life in giving me charge of the paying out of that twine. She was scanning the surface of that turbulent lake through a pair of powerful marine glasses. Presently she said to me:—

"He has made it. He has cleared the first wave and swum over the second."

"Thank you," I answered. "The twine is slowly paying out, so he is making headway."

A little later the girl lowered her glass again and asked:—

"Does the twine still pay out? I can no longer see."

"Yes," I answered. "Slowly but surely he is making his way to the ship."

Presently the twine ceased to pay out, and the girl, who was watching it, observed the fact.

"That means," I answered to her unspoken inquiry, "that he has thrown himself upon his back to rest his muscles and recover his breath."

"I hope so," she said.

"I am sure of it," said I. "But half a minute will tell the tale."

And before the half-minute was ended, the pull upon the twine was resumed. So time after time there was a pause for the swimmer's rest, and time after time the twine ran out again. But the anxious girl, who held her watch in her hand for the purpose, observed that the resting spells became steadily longer and more frequent, while the swimming periods between became shorter of duration.

"Of course he is tired," I answered reassuringly, though my own heart was sinking. "You see, I know Dick Wentworth's ways. He has often said to me that a ten miles' swim is as easy as a one mile's swim if only you keep cool and rest on your back often enough.. I've seen him lie on his back floating for more than half an hour at a time. In this swim he will take all the rest he needs in order to accomplish the end at the last."

Just at that moment the twine began to draw out again, and I almost shouted as I called the girl's attention to the fact.

Presently a great roar went up among the

people on the shore, and looking out to sea I saw on the ship the three-flag signal set, which means "All's well." In the same instant there came three long and rapid pulls upon the twine, which meant, by prearrangement, that it was aboard the ship and that the heavier rope that was to carry the rescuing apparatus should be made fast to the twine, so that it might be hauled aboard.

The girl did that part of the work. She tied, I think, a hundred knots of a hundred different kinds, each utterly secure in itself, and if the sailors out there on the ship had waited to disentangle that feminine fastening of the twine to the service line, I don't know that those people would have been rescued yet. As it was, they cut the twine when the rope's end reached them, but in doing so they detached a girl's handkerchief marked with the name of the young woman who had the marine glass. They had sense enough to turn it over to the exhausted swimmer, who was just then recovering consciousness, under stimulus of another dose of brandy very wisely administered by the ship's doctor.

When Stanfield finished, Mrs. Brantley inquired: —

"Were there women on board that wreck?"

"Yes, certainly, many of them."

"Young women?"

"Of course."

"And your friend permitted himself to be hauled aboard in their presence, with no clothes whatever on him?"

Stanfield, with a look of disgust that might have caused a bronze statue to turn pale, turned away without answering. But Winifred Fair, rising to her feet, answered promptly and with a glitter in her eyes that might have meant mischief if the girl had been other than a civilized creature:—

"In the eyes of a compassionate God," she exclaimed, "that loop of rescuing twine around his body was garment enough."

There was a little clapping of hands, and the overwrought girl sank helplessly into her seat again. Joe Blake grasped her hand and said, "Thank you! and damn such twaddle as that."

Father Funston and Dr. Hatcher gave the response, as if in recitation of a litany, "AMEN."

Stanfield, observing the girl's pallor and other signs of collapse, went to her in his calm, scientific way, took her by the elbow, and led her out of

the room. Passing the sideboard, he paused and poured out a glass of water, into which he dropped a few minims from a vial.

“Drink that,” he said. “This thing has been too much for you.”

XIX

WINIFRED'S TEMPER

THERE was a peculiar note in Winifred's voice as she said what she did to Mrs. Brantley. In a sense it was a note of triumph and of defiance. But it was more personal than that. It seemed as if the girl were speaking in Stanfield's personality rather than in her own. Perhaps the collapse that followed was in part due to her own consciousness of that fact. Certain it is that Stanfield recognized it and for the moment rejoiced in it. But it was only for the moment. During all the hours of that night that he should have given to sleep he lay awake thinking. The utmost modesty that he could summon to his aid could not disguise the fact that this girl had come to think of him in a way in which she thought of no other man. And on his own part he recognized the fact that he loved Winifred Fair, or, as it was more convenient for him to put it, that he would quickly fall to

loving her if he were not already honorably pledged to that woman in Europe, — Carolyn Blake. Somehow the thought of Carolyn no longer set his pulses bounding, and he wondered if his love for her might not have faded out of existence. Then came the thought to him that perhaps, after all, she had absolved him of all obligation to her by her flight from Paris, following, as it had done, closely on the heels of his warning that he meant to go to her to tell her of his love.

But Field Stanfield held himself rigidly to a most exacting code of conduct, especially in his dealings with women. He could not forget that he had written to Carolyn Blake, declaring his love, and promising to follow up the written declaration with a personal one. It was true enough that he had tried to do this, and that circumstances had forbidden him to do so at the time appointed. He could well understand that the girl, disappointed of his promised coming, might, in pride and modesty, have run away, refusing to wait for the coming of a reluctant lover.

Argue the matter as he might, he felt himself still pledged to Carolyn Blake, and while the memory of her sent no thrill either of rejoicing

or of regret through his veins, he felt himself in honor bound to refrain from making love to any other woman so long as anywhere upon earth Carolyn Blake should live.

Altogether Dr. Field Stanfield was a sleepless person during that night and a very unhappy and perplexed one when he jumped into his cold-plunge bath the next morning. He felt the need of sympathy, and, with that touch of foolishness which always blinds a man in love, he went straightway to Winifred for it.

The girl was still a trifle disturbed and excited. She had not yet recovered from the exasperation inflicted by the cold-blooded criticism of Mrs. Brantley. She had not yet lost the enthusiasm of her soul over the story that Field Stanfield had told. Her first words to him revealed her condition of mind:—

“It is precisely as if *you* had carried the line to the stranded ship. Your sympathy with Dick Wentworth’s heroism, and your appreciation of it, have made the thing your own.”

“But no one could fail to sympathize with such an enthusiasm of humane service, and no one could tell the story of its success or listen to it without rejoicing.”

"That Brantley woman did," the girl quickly responded, with a whole volume of contemptuous condemnation in her tone.

"Oh, we needn't mind Mrs. Brantley. But her question reminded me of what Dr. Johnson once said to Boswell. They were looking at an exquisite statue in the nude, but suggestive only of the highest purity of sentiment. Boswell asked the bluff old moralist if he did not think the work indecent. 'No, sir,' answered Johnson, 'but your question is.' It seemed to me that Mrs. Brantley's criticism was peculiarly immodest, but so is much of her thought and much of her work for what she calls 'purity.' I suppose we must overlook that on the ground that she means well."

"How I detest that phrase!" exclaimed the girl, with an intensity of tone that revealed bitterness beneath. "It is used continually to cover up the meanness and littleness and bitterness and badness of people who disguise self-seeking under a cloak of canting hypocrisy. That woman doesn't 'mean well' at all. I know her. She has interfered in damaging ways with many of my efforts to make people happy or to relieve them of suffering. She doesn't want them relieved or

made happy, unless the work is done in her way, and includes a submission on their part to her narrow, hide-bound doctrines. You are a man. You are a generous man, too, and you are easily deceived by such women as that. You don't understand them. You generously assume that Mrs. Brantley 'means well.' That is because you don't know what she does mean."

"What is that?" asked Field, while all he knew of admiration was stirred by the enthusiasm of the girl. He had never seen her in such mood as this before. Her habitual calm had hidden from him the more intensely feminine side of her nature.

"Why, don't you see she is eaten up with a restless ambition to make herself conspicuous? That is all there is of her activity in behalf of temperance, purity, charity, and all the other reforms. She is a childless wife, full of vanity and a restless fussiness. She wants to see her name constantly in the newspapers. She wants to pose as an authority on the need of reform. She makes speeches and reads papers. That would be comparatively harmless, as few people care to listen to her but she actively interferes with good work. Mother Angelo, who was with us at dinner last

evening, told me of her interference in a case known to her. You know Mother Angelo was the founder and is the head of a sisterhood who devote themselves to the work of nursing people afflicted with loathsome diseases. But I didn't need her information to tell me how Mrs. Brantley interferes. I have encountered it myself. Never mind the details of the story. She wanted me to stop feeding and clothing a family of helpless little tots until their hopelessly and helplessly drunken father should take the pledge. I asked you about him and you told me that forty thousand pledges wouldn't sober him. You even said that the more whiskey he got the better it would be, as in that way he would die quicker. Well, when I told her of what you said she broke out in a tirade against all physicians, and you in particular. Ugh, how I detest that woman!"

It is to be said, in defence of Mrs. Brantley, that perhaps Winifred Fair was a prejudiced judge of her. Mrs. Brantley had criticised Field Stanfield, and Winifred resented that.

At any rate, Miss Imboden entered at this juncture and interrupted the conversation before Field Stanfield had even begun to seek counsel of Winifred as to his love perplexity. It was a

welcome relief to him, for as the opportunity to do so seemed approaching, he saw clearly how impossible it must be for a man to ask the woman he loved what he should do to acquit and free himself from a former entanglement of the kind that seemed to tie his hands.

Miss Imboden was full of business.

"Can I have five minutes of your time, Doctor?" she asked eagerly, and before Stanfield replied he looked at his watch. For the young physician's practice had grown of late to such proportions that it was often necessary for him to count the minutes very jealously.

"Yes — I can give you ten minutes. I have a surgical operation to perform just an hour hence. I can drive to the hospital in twenty minutes, and I shall need twenty-five or thirty minutes for preparation. So I can give you the time you ask."

With that Winifred started to withdraw from the room, but Miss Imboden checked her.

"No, don't go, Winifred," she said. "I want your help, too. Let me tell you. Mr. Blake stayed an hour with me last night after the rest of you had gone. He wanted to talk to me about this dear girl, Deborah Gerard. I tell

you, we've got to save her from conditions that are appalling, and you two must do it. Really, your time is too short, Doctor, for me to go into the subject now. You must come to me this evening. Can you get away from your patients by nine o'clock? Very good. Come to me as early as you can. Come in any clothes you may happen to be wearing — there'll be only Winifred and myself here. And you remember we expressed ourselves very tolerantly on the subject of clothes last evening."

"Very well," answered Stanfield. "At any rate, I'll so far yield to Mrs. Brantley's prejudices as to wear something more than a string."

"Please don't jest about that," said the girl, with passionate entreaty in her voice. "Don't jest about that — don't, don't, don't! I tell you, I cannot stand it."

"Pardon me," answered Stanfield, seeing her excited condition; "I didn't mean to jest."

"Well, you mustn't — on that subject, at least."

Then turning to Miss Imboden, he said: —

"I think I understand with respect to Miss Gerard. Joe Blake loves the girl, and she undoubtedly loves him. If he could be persuaded to marry her, I think we could manage the rest.

But he has a cranky notion on the subject. Perhaps you two can persuade him out of it. At any rate, I'll see you both this evening. I must go now."

As he left the house he encountered Joe Blake, evidently about to enter. He asked no question, of course, but Blake answered as if he had done so.

"I'm venturing on a morning call," he said, "because I feel that I must consult Miss Fair. She is wise and kind, and besides I can tell her things that I cannot tell you, old fellow. You are a man, and she is a woman, and — well, there's a difference, you know."

"Very certainly there is, and I commend her to you as a very safe counsellor. But, Joe," he added with some solicitude in his voice, "Miss Fair doesn't seem to me to be quite well this morning. The excitement last night, and particularly Mrs. Brantley —"

"Damn that woman!" interjected Blake.

"With all my heart. But what I want to say is, don't excite her more than you must, and especially don't recall last night's incidents."

"On the contrary," answered Blake, "what I have to talk with her about is as far as possible

removed from the things of last night. It may indeed serve to distract her mind from the things of last night and direct her sympathy into quite another channel."

"Well, be careful, anyhow. I must go now. I have a laparotomy to perform this morning. Good day. And bear in mind that you may trust as right and wise any counsel that Miss Fair may give you."

XX

DEBORAH'S PERIL

WINIFRED and Miss Imboden were together when Joe Blake entered the sun parlor. Blake had rather hoped to find Winifred alone, for the reason that somehow a man finds it easier to talk of emotional things with a young woman, even when he is distinctly not in love with her, than to talk about the same things with a woman of advanced middle age. But upon reflection Blake decided in his own mind that Miss Imboden's presence, during the saying of what he had to say, would be on the whole an advantage. She was wise in counsel, and there was no danger, he thought, that she would be misled by her emotions into the giving of unwise advice as so young a woman as Winifred easily might be. So when Miss Imboden, perceiving something of the agitated condition of his mind, offered to leave him alone with Winifred, he begged her to stay, and she stayed.

"I want to talk to you about a whole lot of things," he began, "and I don't at all know in what order to put them."

"Suppose you light a cigar, Mr. Blake," said Miss Imboden, "and let your conversation run along naturally. You are not making an address, you know, or delivering a lecture to Winifred and me, and I believe the cigars are good. Dr. Stanfield bought them for me. Or perhaps you would prefer a pipe? I have church wardens and cobs, and some good tobacco — all bought for me by Dr. Stanfield."

"Would you really not mind if I took a pipe?" he asked eagerly. "I think I should get on better that way."

"Certainly not. We want you to be entirely comfortable, and Winifred insists that pipe smoke doesn't infect the curtains as cigar smoke does. Not that the curtains matter, of course. For there are lots of poor curtain cleaners, and I give mine out to them once a month, anyhow. But you are to smoke what you please, and you are to bestow yourself in whatever chair you find most comfortable while you talk."

"I seriously doubt that Mrs. Brantley would approve your hospitality in the matter of smoking," said Blake.

"Please don't mention that woman," interrupted Winifred. "If you do, I shall be driven to use some of the unparliamentary terms you so properly employed last night. That wouldn't be becoming in a young woman like me, you know."

"Well," said Blake, "if you will kindly consider all that unparliamentary language used and applied anew, I won't mention the woman again. Now let me tell you. As I told you last night, Miss Imboden, I am very deeply interested in this young woman, Deborah Gerard. Her case seems to me to be a peculiarly pitiful one, and one peculiarly hard to deal with. So far as a mere money support is concerned, I and others have so far managed to provide for that."

"Why do you say 'and others,' Mr. Blake?" asked Miss Imboden.

"Well, you see —"

"Yes, I see and I know all about it. Dr. Field Stanfield has told me enough to let my woman's wits guess the rest."

"Well, anyhow," said Joe Blake, covering his shame-faced retreat by emptying and refilling his pipe, "as I was saying, it is possible to provide for her physical needs; but the atmosphere in

which she lives is simply damnable. I beg your pardon, I mean she simply can't stand it. She spends all her days and all her evenings in company with that old drunken father of hers, to whom she is gloriously loyal in spite of his degradation. The thing is telling upon her, and I tell you it must stop, even if I have to go and hurry the old man into the grave that awaits him by choking him to death."

"But how are we to stop it, Mr. Blake?" asked Miss Imboden. "We are practical people, you know."

"Why, by employing the girl on some work that will require all her time to be spent away from what she mistakenly calls her home. If you can arrange that, I'll have the other fellows withdraw all the work they are giving her to do at home, so that on the plea of bread-and-butter winning she simply must go away and leave the old man. Then, as he simply cannot be left alone, I'll get Stanfield to persuade him to go into a sanitarium of some kind. Of course he will kick at that, because in the sanitariums they cut off the liquor supply. But I'll arrange that. I'll fix it with the sanitarium people so that he shall have his own sideboard, which I will keep

stocked. You see, so far as he is concerned nothing matters. Stanfield tells me he can't live for more than a few months at best — or worst — and it will be a real mercy to him to let him have all the liquor he can drink during that time. You see, Stanfield says that his death will be neither hastened by the liquor he drinks nor delayed by any abstinence he may be forced to practise. His vital organs — liver, kidneys, heart, stomach, and I don't know what else — are so far damaged that one or the other of them is bound to kill him presently, no matter what he does or doesn't do. He doesn't count in the reckoning at all, but for God's sake, and humanity's sake, and for the sake of womanhood, I beg of you two good women that you will help me to save the girl! I will supply all the money necessary. It is for you only to devise a way by which she shall seem to be compelled to live somewhere else than where he is; while he, for lack of her presence and care, shall be compelled to go to a sanitarium or somewhere else to live out the wretched remainder of his days. If he can't be sent to a sanitarium, we'll send him to a Raines-law hotel or to some other and decenter place. The one imperative thing is to save that poor girl."

Joe Blake had broken two church-warden pipes to bits in the excitement of his discourse, and by way of calming himself he now filled and lighted another.

Meanwhile, Miss Imboden spoke in those calm, even, and perfectly self-possessed tones of hers that tended mightily to restore calm to her auditors:—

“So far as money is concerned, Mr. Blake, it will be a privilege to me to furnish all of that that may be required or in any way useful. I may say to you that the one present desire of my soul is to get rid of money in ways that will benefit any human being. But I don’t quite understand. Of course it is embarrassing and disagreeable for Deborah to live with a drunken father, who is indeed something worse than drunken, for I had a begging letter from him this morning, and I have no doubt that he writes other such letters to other people, and thereby sorely shames his daughter. But she seems to know how to manage him in a way, and so long as her material wants are supplied, perhaps her painful ministry to him may be of advantage to her.”

Joe Blake suddenly and convulsively gripped

his long-stemmed, church-warden pipe so that it broke in his hand and fell upon the hard mosaic floor. Instinctively he stooped, as if to gather up the fragments, but Miss Imboden interposed.

"Never mind that," she said. "The maids will sweep here after a while. Light another pipe and tell me what is in your mind."

With a carefully assumed deliberation which he did not feel, Joe Blake said, "Thank you," in recognition of the courtesy, and proceeded to fill another pipe. When he had lighted it, he turned to Winifred, and said:—

"Perhaps it would be as well, Miss Fair, for you not to hear what I am going to say to Miss Imboden. Would you mind leaving us alone for five minutes or so?"

There was so much of earnestness and gentle consideration for herself in his tone and manner, that Winifred could not take offence.

"I will go above stairs," she said. "If you want me again, you can call me on the 'phone."

"Thank you," he replied. "I shall certainly want you again. It is only —"

"No explanation is necessary," she answered. "Your sincerity is obvious enough, and certainly it needs no excuse."

When she had gone Joe Blake turned his intensely earnest eyes upon Miss Imboden's face and said:—

“Something has happened since our talk last night. That old man was once a reputable dealer in rare second-hand books. He fell into the habit of drinking simply because he had too much leisure time on his hands. The worst of it was that he drank, not socially and occasionally, but in solitude and constantly. He kept a bottle behind the books on a shelf, and he soaked its contents. His wife had died some years before, and he had only this daughter living with him in his shop. Little by little he turned the business over to her, and she conducted it as best she could. At last he found his capital slowly melting away and his rent eating him up. He thought to recover himself by a plunge in Wall Street. He lost everything instead, and from that day to this he has been dependent upon her earnings. But that is not the worst of it. He has pawned everything of hers that any Shylock would make an advance even of a few cents upon.”

“Yes, I know,” said Miss Imboden. “I have a sad letter from the girl herself this morning, telling me that he has pawned the gown and the

shoes I gave her for last night. I understand."

"But you do not know how great a handicap this has been to her. She cannot even take a rare book home for purposes of copying but he steals and sells or pawns it."

"I realize the situation," said Miss Imboden.

"No, you don't. You don't even dream of it," exclaimed Joe Blake, puffing hard at his pipe that had gone out. "You know only the outside of things. I have tried to be kind to the girl, and the old beast has discovered my sentiment. Just as he saw your disposition to befriend her and sought to play upon it with a begging letter, so he thought he saw that I was in love with the girl, and in the utter degradation that drink has brought upon him he has written to me, making an infamous proposal. There is the letter. Read it."

Blake broke another pipe while Miss Imboden was reading the letter, and he apologized or began to do so.

"Oh, break the whole box, if you want to," she said; "and break the chandelier and all the furniture if your righteous indignation finds that necessary to its adequate expression." Then

she turned to the telephone, and Winifred, above stairs, responded.

"Come to us quickly," said Miss Imboden, and Winifred, white-faced and excited still, presently appeared.

"Mr. Blake has told me something horrible," Miss Imboden said. "Never mind what it is. We must save that girl and we must do it to-day. Put on your plainest things, take the carriage, and go to her at once. Tell her you have an engagement for her as a private secretary, and that it will occupy absolutely all of her time. Tell her I want her to live with me, to sleep in a room adjoining my own, and to be ready to answer my summons at any hour of the night. She will object, on the ground that she must care for her father. Tell her, for answer, that her father will be taken care of if she comes to me, and that in any case she will lose all the work she is now doing, and with it lose even her ability to take care of her father. Tell her anything you like, only you must bring her to me, to stay with me. Make any conceivable arrangement, even if it includes the quartering of her father at the Waldorf-Astoria. Bear in mind, child, that the one supremely important thing is to bring the girl

to me with the understanding that she is to stay with me night and day. If necessary to maintain the fiction, I'll dictate letters in my sleep or wake up at two in the morning to dictate letters to wholly imaginary persons. The girl is in far more distressing danger than either of us has imagined. Go at once and bring her to me, for good and all."

Winifred read in Joe Blake's beseeching eyes an appeal as strong as that which Miss Imboden had made in her excited words. She knew not what the danger to Deborah was, and she indulged in no idle curiosity concerning it. It was quite enough for her to know that these two were alarmed for Deborah's safety, and that their knowledge of her circumstances prompted them to send her upon this peremptory errand of mercy.

She hurriedly donned her hat and wraps, and entering the carriage, which stood at the door, gave the coachman his orders.

XXI

JOE BLAKE'S CONFESSION

WHEN Winifred had gone Joe Blake suddenly remembered that he had not talked with her at all concerning those affairs of his own about which he had meant to ask her advice. On the whole, he thought that perhaps it was just as well. At any rate, those affairs would brook delay, while Deborah's danger would not. As he walked about the room smoking and trying to make up his mind what to do next, or how to say good morning, he presently said to Miss Imboden:—

“You see, the old brute might make some such offer as that to some man who would accept it — there are so many damned scoundrels in the world — I beg your pardon, Miss Imboden, I've a bad habit of swearing —”

“In this case I should call it a thoroughly good habit,” she answered. “It is a case in which the absence of profanity on your part would

imply weakness, and whatever other faults you may have, nobody can accuse you of moral weakness."

"Oh, I don't know," he said. "I sometimes think I have been weaker than water. I'll tell you about all that sometime, but not now."

"No, not now," the wise woman answered. "You are greatly excited now and your first duty is to calm yourself. I want you to light another pipe, pick out a comfortable chair, and talk to me of other things. I wish you would tell me something of your newspaper work — I'm interested in that."

"I've given it up," he answered. "I resigned from the staff last week, and it is my purpose to make no future newspaper connection. You see, Miss Imboden, I am unlike most other newspaper men in that I have some independent means — nothing great, but still enough to make me, in a measure, free from the necessity of doing newspaper work. It is true —"

Here he hesitated and Miss Imboden interposed: —

"You are not to tell me anything that you don't want to tell, Mr. Blake," she said gently. "You are under no sort of obligation to tell me any-

thing at all, and I am truthful when I say that I have no idle curiosity."

"Thank you!" he said. "But I really want to tell you everything, and I shall do so if ever we become a little better acquainted. But that acquaintance, of course, is out of the question now."

"Why so? I look forward with a good deal of pleasure to seeing much of you here."

"So should I," Blake answered haltingly, "if it might be so, but you see — Deborah Gerard is to be with you, and —"

"But what difference does that make? Surely she is a pleasant person to meet."

The exact truth is that Miss Imboden, being a woman, had strongly within her that desire which is slanderously called the "match-making instinct." That is to say, she had the desire which every good woman shares that the right man and the right woman shall marry. She had something more than a suspicion that Deborah Gerard and Joe Blake were strongly inclined toward each other, and she wanted these conditions to work out their natural results in a natural way. Therefore, she asked her questions.

"That's just it, Miss Imboden," answered Blake. "You see, I hope you won't think me

a conceited cad, and yet I can't very well explain without seeming to be just that. You see, when I first knew Miss Gerard she was in terrible need, and in my efforts to arrange for the relief of her distress without offending her pride and independence, I suppose I said and did some things which a young woman had a perfect right to interpret as meaning — well, a tender personal interest. Anyhow, I have felt it necessary to avoid — confound it, Miss Imboden, you are a woman and you understand. I don't want to mislead that girl. I don't want her to misunderstand my attitude or to misinterpret it. And frankly," he presently broke out as if in desperation, "I don't want, on my own side, to fall in love with her, as I am in very serious danger of doing if I go on seeing much of her."

Miss Imboden did not answer on the instant. Instead she went to a book-case and took down one of those fat little Bibles that women are fond of carrying to church. Turning to the first chapter of Genesis, she pointed to the passage which reads, "So God created man in His own image. in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

When he had read that she pointed to a pas-

sage farther down the page, and Blake read aloud:—

“And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.”

“That is all well and good,” he answered. “But you do not understand. Your thought is that I care enough for Deborah Gerard to justify me in making her my wife, if by chance she should come to care enough for me to induce her to consent to that. That is your meaning, isn’t it, Miss Imboden? I ask you frankly.”

“And I answer frankly, yes,” she said.

Then Joe Blake emptied his pipe, filled it again, lighted it, and resumed his seat. All the while Miss Imboden was waiting for him to speak. Finally he asked:—

“You do not think of me otherwise than as an honorable man, do you, Miss Imboden?”

“Certainly not,” she answered. “Indeed, it isn’t a case of thinking, but one of knowing. I *know* you are an honorable man, and one who properly considers the woman in every case involving the relations of women and men.”

“Very well, then. Let me tell you frankly that I have been very near falling in love with Deborah Gerard. Only a sense of honor and,

as you happily phrase it, a proper consideration of the woman has prevented that. Perhaps I have not done quite all that I should in the way of properly considering the woman in this case. We will not discuss that. It is only that I ought to have told Miss Gerard at the outset what I am going to tell you now, — that I am already a married man. You see how it is. I have a wife. I have not seen her for a year or so. I do not even know where she is. But she is, and — well, you understand. I *must* not fall in love with any other, and I must not let any other woman learn — well, learn to like me under a misapprehension as to my freedom. I *must* not see Miss Gerard, and therefore under present arrangements I must not come to this house or to your apartments.”

Miss Imboden took the young man's hand with an expression of unspeakable sympathy, mingled with admiration, in her countenance. As she was about to speak, Joe Blake interrupted her: —

“You're not going to suggest a divorce? No? I'm glad of that. I would die a thousand deaths rather than drag her name through the muck and mire of a divorce court. I loved her once with all of passion there is in me. I mourn her

now as we mourn the dead — reverently, solemnly, and with an ineffable tenderness of regret. That is why —”

He could not continue. Perhaps there was really no more to say. Miss Imboden, still holding his hand, presently said: —

“Joe Blake, you are a man — a good man, a true man, a brave man. I am a woman old enough to say so to you, and to say that from this hour I shall cherish you as one of the few whom I count as my trusted and trustworthy friends. You must be an intimate both here and in my real home. I will consent to nothing less, and in order that it may be so, I shall in my own womanly and motherly way tell Deborah Gerard what you have told me. Then there need be no embarrassment and no danger in your seeing much of her. She will understand, and no harm can come to a young woman from her appreciation and admiration of such a man as you are, when she knows that love in the ordinary sense is forbidden between the two. You ought to have told her before, but I can easily understand why you hesitated to do so. I shall tell her now, and you may be sure I shall tell nobody else, either now or hereafter.”

Blake stood looking at her and thinking for a time. Finally he said : —

“That will be best. It isn’t what I had planned or thought of. But it will be best. You are a wise counsellor, Miss Imboden. I must go now. I don’t want to be here when Miss Fair returns with Miss Gerard.”

“After all,” he thought as he started across town, “I didn’t tell her why I have given up newspaper work. But that will keep.”

“After all,” thought Miss Imboden, when he had gone, “he didn’t tell me why he has given up newspaper work. But that will keep.”

XXII

THE END OF A STRUGGLE

WINIFRED found Deborah in a state of anger and humiliation that bordered upon frenzy. The poor girl had learned of the pawning of her gown and shoes, which she had meant to return to Miss Imboden as a matter of pride, principle, and honor. She had reproached the old drunkard on that account with a severity that she had never used with him before, and in his drunken efforts to defend himself he had let slip certain hints that afflicted her soul beyond endurance.

"You needn't worry about the dress," he said, "nor the shoes, neither. I'm planning to have plenty of money very soon," and with that he tried in his drunken way to wink suggestively.

"Plenty of money?" exclaimed the girl. "Don't I earn enough? Don't I pay our rent and provide food in spite of your interferences? Haven't I kept a home for us? And —"



"ANSWER ME!" SHE COMMANDED. — *Page 283.*

"Oh, yes, you've done very well considering. But you don't know how to 'work' your rich friends for all they are worth, and I do."

"What have you been doing?" she asked in a tone so passionate that it fairly frightened him into confession. He told her he had "made a humble appeal" to Miss Imboden by mail.

The girl was strong now in her indignation, so that she did not fall into collapse.

"Do you mean that you have sent her a begging letter?"

"Never mind what I mean," he answered; "there'll be some money coming out o' this and out o' something else."

"Answer me!" she commanded. "Did you send a begging letter to Miss Imboden?"

The old wreck of a man was quailing now before his daughter's wrath, and felt that he must answer her.

"I only represented to her our condition of need and asked her for a loan."

The girl stood quivering. After a moment she went to her desk and scribbled a hasty note to Miss Imboden. In it she said:—

"My father has stolen and pawned the gown and shoes you provided for me, but they shall be

returned to you to-day. That I will take care of. Worse still, he confesses that he has written you a begging letter. I entreat you destroy it. Whatever else you do, don't respond to it with money or in any other way. If you do, I shall jump off a ferry boat. Don't, don't, don't! If you humiliate me by sending so much as a line in reply, I tell you I shall destroy myself, and I mean it literally. Don't, don't, don't!"

Then the girl turned to practical things. Just across the street there was a sign which read, "Furniture of flats bought." She hurried across, mailing her letter as she went, and within the quarter hour she had sold everything in her little apartment for cash. She said to her father:

"I've sold out everything here, and the man takes possession two hours hence. I have had to do it, to redeem Miss Imboden's property that you pawned. You and I must go into the street."

The old man was weeping piteously and entreating by this time, but his daughter was relentless in her humiliation. She refused even to stay and listen. She hurried to the pawnbroker's instead, and redeemed the gown and shoes. Then she returned to her father.

"See!" she said. "I've got these things back

again. I shall take them to Miss Imboden's door and leave them with the servant there. Then I shall set out to hunt work again and food. Here is all the money left from the sale of our things, all but my car fare to Miss Imboden's. Take it. This is the end. The rent here is paid till the end of the month. You can sleep on the floor. I can sleep in a doorway somewhere."

The old man was partially sobered by the fright into which the girl's passionate outburst had thrown him. His was a purely selfish fright. What if Deborah should commit suicide? he thought. Who, then, would provide him with the necessities of life? Beast that he had become through drink, he had no thought of any suffering that she might have to endure, or of any danger that might befall her. The girl heard his plaint and looked at him. For the first time she understood how utterly selfish he had become. For the first time she could think of him without affection and otherwise than as the father she had loved in childhood. She knew nothing of his infamous offer to Joe Blake, of course. Had she known that, she would have felt like cursing him where he sat in the easy-chair that she had provided for him, and that must presently be taken

away. As it was, she still had enough care for him to hunt for a cracker box, and say:—

“You can sit on that after the man removes the furniture. I’m sorry that you must sleep on the floor. I will try hard to earn some money and send you enough to put food in your mouth. But I promise nothing. You have ruined all my endeavors to make a home for us two. We must part now. If I can get work, I must live wherever I can, away from you.”

It was at that moment that Winifred Fair entered, and a few words revealed to her all that she needed to know of the situation. Those words came naturally in the shape of a request that Winifred should undertake the delivery of the gown and shoes to Miss Imboden. Deborah was in desperate mood, and she told the girl of what her father had done, as if trying to shake from herself the taint and stain of it all. Winifred listened until she was through. Then she said, in her practical, common-sense way:—

“I have come after you, dear. You are wanted as a private secretary to Miss Imboden. You will live in the house with us — by night as well as by day, for we keep no regular hours and Miss Imboden sometimes dictates at two o’clock in the

morning, or at least she wishes to feel that she is free to do so whenever she so desires. It is a good place and of course you'll accept it. Its acceptance will compel the breaking up of your home here —"

"I have no home here," the girl broke in. "My father has destroyed all that, and every stick of the furniture will be removed within the hour. I accept the employment you offer."

"Very well. You father will be provided for in some way, so that your necessity of leaving him —"

"It is a necessity that he has himself created. He has sowed the wind, and if he reaps the whirlwind he has only himself to blame."

The bitterness in the girl's voice was so intense that it seemed to cut like a knife into the consciousness of her auditor. But it made no impression upon her father. He had heard the promise that he should be provided for in some way, and encouraged by that prospect, he had stopped his maudlin wailings and begun to smile again.

Suddenly a thought struck the half-distracted girl.

"Tell me, Winifred Fair," she exclaimed almost

angrily, "is this charity? Are you and Miss Imboden doing this as a disguised means of giving me alms?"

"No," answered Winifred, speaking earnestly. "It is true that Miss Imboden has a great desire to save you from some danger that she thinks threatens you, or from some condition that she thinks is likely to come upon you. I don't know just what it is that she has in her mind in that respect. She hasn't told me. But quite apart from that, she really needs a secretary,—an expert stenographer and typewriter,—and I have for some time been looking out for such a young woman. But Miss Imboden is exigent upon several points, and I haven't found anybody yet that fulfilled her conditions to her satisfaction. If it were only to secure a young woman who could do her work capably, I could have found a dozen such very easily. But she reminds me that the young woman who takes this position must be her constant companion, sitting with her at her meals, and sleeping in a room adjoining her own."

"Perhaps I might not please her in so close a contact," objected Deborah.

"But you will. She has seen enough of you to make up her mind, and Miss Imboden never

mistakes her own mind. She is a really wonderful woman in that way. Now let us be off. Miss Imboden will send Dr. Stanfield here sometime to-day to arrange for your father's comfort. Come!"

It required only a few minutes for Deborah to pack up her very few belongings. Then she turned to her father to say good-by, and in spite of her anger and disgust, something of her old tenderness returned, so that a tear or two slipped out between her eyelids as she kissed him and said, "I am glad you won't have to sleep on the floor, after all, daddy."

So was the old man glad. But his was an utterly selfish rejoicing. Drink had destroyed all possibility of a finer feeling in him.

A few hours later Field Stanfield, acting for Miss Imboden, visited him in the stripped and deserted apartment. He found him stretched upon the floor, unconscious and clammily cold. The physician saw instantly that he was in collapse. He hurried down the stairs and sent in a call for an ambulance. At the hospital Stanfield and his fellow-physicians labored for thirty-six hours to save the worthless life, but their work went for nothing, and at the end of that time the old man ceased to breathe.

XXIII

MISS IMBODEN'S ACTIVITIES

DEBORAH seemed stricken with dumbness when the news came to her of her father's death. She had loved that old man in her childhood. She had grown up with him as her only companion. He had directed her reading and had given her such education as she had. But in those later years his bad habits and the degeneracy of character induced by them had gone far to weaken the bond of affection between the two. And at the last, as we know, the old man had strained the relation to the breaking point. Still the old love lingered in the soul of the girl, and to Winifred she said, when they returned from the cemetery: —

“I'm glad I kissed him that last day and called him ‘daddy,’ as I used to do when I was a little girl.”

She never again mentioned him either to Wini-

fred or to Miss Imboden. She turned instead from a darkened past to a future that had light and hope in it. She set to work earnestly, almost violently, upon her new tasks, and prosecuted them with tireless diligence.

Miss Imboden had managed somehow to extract a good deal of wisdom from the dinner-table talk and she remodelled her plans in the light of it. To Field Stanfield she said: —

“Of course we’ll continue our work — especially that part of it which engages your attention. There can never be any doubt that it is worth while to send a physician to treat the illnesses of all those women and children who cannot afford to call a physician for themselves. As for the rest, I am going to organize an effort to find out and in some degree relieve the distresses of those others of whom Mr. Blake spoke so feelingly the other night — the well-to-do poor, you know.”

In the execution of this purpose she found Stanfield and Blake to be her wisest advisers, but in addition to such suggestions as they could make, she organized something like a bureau of inquiry to search out individual needs that might be relieved by direct or indirect means. For it is one of the most difficult of tasks to give away a large

sum of money in ways that will be helpful and at the same time work no harmful results. There is always the short cut of endowing a college or a library, of course; but Miss Imboden agreed with her two chief advisers that too much had already been done in that way. She did, indeed, at Stanfield's suggestion, endow a number of scholarships in medical colleges and other professional schools, by way of helping young men whose lack of means threatened to deprive them of the training they needed. But in the main her benefactions were more direct. When she learned that the small meat dealer who had served her flat for a year or so to her satisfaction was about to fall into insolvency, she "bought his business" and set him up in it anew, herself directing certain improvements of method in its conduct which for want of means he had never been able to make before. At the first she took a mortgage on the business as her security, requiring the dealer to pay interest at a low rate upon the money she had invested. That was done to avoid pauperizing him. Then she sought out the marketman's wife, a pleasant-faced young German woman with two babies, and made her a present of the mortgage as a possession in trust for her children.

"You see," she explained, "your husband will do a much better business now, and he can easily pay the interest on the mortgage, and gradually work out the principal. You are to receive the payments, and you are to put the money away in the savings bank for yourself and your little people."

So, far from pauperizing the beneficiaries of her generosity in this case, she succeeded in stimulating that marketman and his wife to new endeavors, and she had the pleasure after a while of seeing his little business gradually develop into a great, thronged market for the sale, not of meats only, but of everything imaginable in the way of food-stuffs.

One day the Rev. Dr. Hatcher, who had completely won her confidence by the sincerity of his human sympathy, told Miss Imboden of a young couple whom he was presently to marry — as soon as they should be able to pay for the furnishing of a little flat. She instantly set Deborah and Winifred to find and purchase and furnish a little suburban home for the young people. Then she placed it in the hands of Dr. Hatcher, bidding him give it to them as an anonymous wedding present. In the same way she had Father Fun-

ston with her frequently and learned from him of many cases of human need of the kind she was seeking.

It was Field Stanfield who pointed out to her an opportunity for larger benefaction. He told her the terrible facts with respect to tuberculosis, or, as he picturesquely called it, "the white plague."

"It kills more people every year," he said to her, "than any other half-dozen diseases together do. We stand aghast when an epidemic of yellow fever or cholera slays thousands; but tuberculosis kills more people every year than any of the more violently epidemic diseases ever killed in any year. And yet it is both curable and preventable. In very many cases it can be cured, if taken in time, and in all cases it could be prevented. It is the worst scourge known to man — worse than cholera, yellow fever, smallpox, or the Eastern plague itself. I regard it as the most imperative duty of science, of charity, and of law to wage war upon that disease, particularly now that science has learned how such a war may be successfully waged."

It was under inspiration of this plea for humanity that Miss Imboden began her study of ways and means of combating consumption.

At first she proposed to buy many abandoned farms in many parts of the country, and colonize upon them the people afflicted with the dread disease. She soon found, however, that a vigorous local opposition arose in every neighborhood in which she planned to establish one of her homes for consumptives. This opposition sometimes took the form of a boycott, sometimes of legal proceedings in the courts, and in a few instances it developed into physical violence by angry mobs.

"The trouble is half knowledge," said Field Stanfield. "The people generally have learned just enough to know that consumption is a communicable disease, and not enough to know that under such conditions as those we establish there is no more danger of contagion or infection than there is in the case of a rip in one's trousers."

Then it was that Joe Blake interposed with a shrewd suggestion.

"The mistake is your own," he said; "you needlessly alarm these people by calling your establishments 'homes for consumptives' or something of that sort. You should disinfect your names — sterilize them. When you buy an old farm and build shanties on it for consump-

tives to live in, why don't you call it 'the winter rest' or 'celery farm' or 'the canary bird cottages,' setting the patients to grow celery or sending out a lot of canaries by way of justifying the name? Did you ever read Saxe's poem called 'The Devil of Names'? It is full of wisdom."

This suggestion helped mightily. But another difficulty was encountered. Not all, not one-half, not even one-tenth of those afflicted with the dread disease, could be spared from their bread-winning activities even to take the free treatment at Miss Imboden's expense. The great majority of them had work to do, from which they could in nowise be spared. And this was especially true of those whose attacks were incipient and therefore hopeful of cure. Unlike other maladies, the white plague proceeds slowly to do its killing, and while doing it, it leaves a certain working vitality in its victims which they cannot afford to throw away.

This fact fixed a limit to Miss Imboden's efforts in that direction, but she had become interested in the subject and had read attentively all the publications of the Tenement-house Commission, the Consumer's League, and all other organizations whose investigations concerned themselves

with the subject. Calling her advisers about her, she put to them the question:—

“How best shall we combat the white plague in its cradle? How best shall we strangle it at birth? In what way can money be used to assail the disease in its origin?”

Miss Imboden was a wise and a broad-minded woman. She perfectly understood that those who are working for the amelioration of human conditions are, like all other men and women, subject to what Herbert Spencer calls professional bias. Accordingly, she planned to offset the bias of the one with the bias of another. She gave dinners in Stuyvesant Square very frequently now, and the company was never twice the same, though Stanfield, Joe Blake, Winifred, and Deborah were always present.

“I want you four,” she said to them, “for listeners who can afterward become interpreters to me of whatever is valuable in what the others say.”

In this way, and in a number of other ways, she carried on her work. She found a woman who had something akin to genius in the writing of realistic stories, but whose work, as is often the case with the most gifted of writers, did not sell

for enough to give the woman a decent living for herself, her little boy, and her invalid husband. Miss Imboden at once set her to work upon a salary. She bade her study conditions and work them into stories that should tend to arouse human sympathy and stimulate protest. Then she herself arranged for the publication of the stories.

But money, of which she had a superabundance, was not the only thing Miss Imboden had to give in the way of helpfulness. It was not even the chief thing. Her work for humanity had so far quickened her sympathies that her very words were benefactions — her look a benediction to those who suffered.

She was sought out by many women who needed no material help, but whose need of her counsel and her sympathy was more imperative than any material need could be.

Nor was this confined to women. Joe Blake soon came to regard this elderly and rather peremptory woman as the best and nearest friend he had in all the world, and to her he came one evening for counsel.

XXIV

MISS IMBODEN'S JUDGMENT

IT was at her apartment, and not at the house in Stuyvesant Square, that Joe Blake had his conference with Miss Imboden. Miss Imboden had arranged it in that way, in order that the conference might not be interrupted. She was in the habit of receiving many people in Stuyvesant Square, who knew nothing of her residence in an apartment in Central Park West. All those who were coadjutors in her charitable work were free to come and go in the one house, while in the other nobody other than Winifred, Deborah, Blake, and Stanfield was ever received except by special invitation. It was in that way, partly, that Miss Imboden guarded her privacy, secured her rest, and kept herself comparatively young.

But Miss Imboden had an abiding affection for Joe Blake. She admired his qualities, and she personally liked him as a woman of her age might have liked her own son.

Accordingly, in preparation for Joe Blake's coming, she bade Stanfield provide pipes and tobacco, and when Blake came she insisted upon his using them as freely as if he had been sitting alone in his own rooms.

In spite of all this, however, Joe Blake found it difficult to begin what he had to say to Miss Imboden, and he used afterward to think that he would never have begun at all if she had not herself opened the conversation.

"You told me a few months ago," she began, "that you had given up newspaper work, and you were going to tell me why, but something interrupted, and you didn't."

"Oh, yes, I remember. Well, you see, my last two novels and my boys' books have succeeded so well that the publishers want more. That means — oh, confound it, Miss Imboden; I don't see why I shouldn't tell you the whole truth! Let me begin at the beginning. A few years ago I married. I was deeply in love with my wife, and I rather liked newspaper work. She was deeply in love with music, and, I think, she rather liked me. But I saw very little of her, and she gave me absolutely none of that sympathy with my work which it seems to me a man so engaged has a

right to expect from his wife. Don't misunderstand me, please, I am making no complaint of her. She wanted me to do well in my work, but she did not at all understand it or care for it. She loyally tried to interest herself in it, but just as I would approach the critical point in the reading of an article or a story she would jump up, seize her violin, make a screechy noise, and ask me what I thought of that 'transition.' When I began writing magazine articles, she tried very hard to feel an interest in them. But as soon as she began reading, some long-haired musical galoot would come in, and for the next three hours the two would talk music and make music as if music were the only thing of consequence in this world—as if it made our bread and butter for us and provided the parsnips. The thing wouldn't have been so intolerable if those music-crazed people had been possessed of any brains. But music-mad people rarely are, you know. Their heads are fertile only of hair. They revel only in sound. They do not think. They cannot converse. They equally fail to appreciate a witticism or to comprehend a philosophical statement. They are meagrely educated, most of them, and such education as they have has never served to irritate

their brains into the thinking of anything worth while. Usually they can't spell, and it would take an hour for one of them to find out that the square of twenty-five is six hundred and twenty-five. Yet they persistently pose as superior persons whose very arrogant ill manners are to be excused as a manifestation of genius — an expression of the artistic temperament and all that 'rot.' However, I didn't mean to run off on that. Let me go on with my story.

"These people somehow persuaded my wife — who was only eighteen years old — that she was a musical genius, and that she 'owed it to her art' — that is one of their cant phrases, you know — to cultivate her gift and perfect it. So presently she wanted to go abroad for music study. Now it is my conviction that if one takes the trouble to look for it, he can find pretty nearly everything in New York that exists anywhere. I could not see why my wife might not find here quite as good instruction in music as was to be had in Europe. But the music-maniacs laughed that suggestion to scorn.

"It was a troubled time for me. I had a very small income then, apart from my newspaper earnings, and I had literary ambitions far beyond

newspaper work. It was simply impossible that I should myself take my wife to Europe, and in that way cut off my earnings. So at last it was decided that she should go and I should stay here to earn the money necessary.

“She went abroad and arranged to live cheaply with an artist and his wife. I did not know the artist or his wife, but I knew them to be highly respectable persons and so I was satisfied. My wife’s mere living was inexpensive, but there were positively enormous prices to pay for her instruction by conceited and flattered music fools of every sort, and there was a good deal of expense for places at the opera, the concert, and the like, and for hats and gowns with which to appear at such places. But I knew my business as a newspaper man, and I was able to furnish the money needed.

“At first it was understood that my wife was to remain abroad for six months. Presently she wrote me that her masters simply could not complete what they called ‘the perfect development of her artistic gift’ within less than a year. A little later, when the year was almost up, the music-mad people decided that she must have still another year of instruction and opportunity,

and they declared that to deny her that would be to deny to the world one of the greatest geniuses it had ever known. I couldn't quite understand. If my wife had such extraordinary gifts, I couldn't see why so long a schooling was necessary to bring them out. I have an idea that real genius of any kind requires very little in the way of technical instruction. Above all, I wanted my wife."

At this point in his story Blake seemed to be specially distressed. His voice thickened, and he began pacing the room. Miss Imboden wisely waited for him to recover his self-control. At last he said:—

"You must understand, Miss Imboden, that I love that little wife of mine, that during all these weary months I have looked forward to her final home-coming as I never looked forward to anything else in the world. But I'm an irritable brute, you know."

Miss Imboden understood and gently smiled.

"I suppose I wrote too harshly to her. I expressed myself rather freely about music and still more freely about musicians. For the first time she wrote in reply with some heat, and for a time our letters—well, you understand. It was a lit-

tle quarrel, but there was abundant love behind it. It was all my fault, you know. I wrote to her, among other things, that I thought a loyal, loving woman was of more worth in the world than a musical genius, and that I thought a woman really ought to care more for her husband than for a fiddle, and more for his companionship than for the hollow applause of a gang of the music mads. Then — well, you know how it is. A man who is continually writing for effect, as I am, falls into the habit of making his words as incisive and convincing as he can. It becomes an uncontrollable impulse, and it is a vice when he lets it control the framing of his letters. You see, one ought never to forget, in writing a letter, and particularly an earnest, half-angry letter that his words are addressed directly to an individual person and may therefore have a wounding capacity that would not belong to them if he were writing an essay for publication instead of a letter. I see all that very clearly now, but I didn't see it at the time, and so I did a dastardly thing that I can never forgive myself for doing."

"Perhaps others might not so interpret what you did," interposed Miss Imboden. "Certainly I agree with all you have thus far told me that

you put into your letters at that trying time. But go on. I want to hear."

"Well, under the heat and excitement of the letter-writing I was coarse enough and base enough to remind her that I was slaving on a newspaper to earn the money she was spending, and that perhaps my literary abilities, which the newspaper work was crippling, might really be worth quite as much to the world as her musical gift was."

"Go on," said Miss Imboden. "You haven't told me yet of the dastardly thing you did."

"Why, that was it. Don't you see I made myself a brute by —"

"No, I see nothing of the kind. No woman need marry a man unless she chooses. If she marries him, she undertakes to unite her life with his, and after that she has no right whatever to separate the two lives — particularly if her impulse to do so is one of mere vanity."

"Oh, but you mustn't misjudge her," interrupted Blake, eagerly. "You see, I really suppose she has musical genius, or at any rate she sincerely believes she has, and it ought to have been my pride and pleasure to give up everything in order to let her perfect her gift. I was angry when I wrote that, and it was a brutal thing to do."

"Joe Blake," interrupted Miss Imboden, who had so far adopted Blake as to call him by his abbreviated first name — "Joe Blake, you are the most delightfully wrong-headed and illogical person I ever knew. But I wouldn't make you over on logical lines if I could. That would be spoiling a masterpiece of God's handiwork. Go on and tell me the rest of the story."

"Well, that cruel, brutal, utterly unmanly letter of mine seems to have wounded her gentle spirit beyond forgiveness. She was living in Paris then, with her artist friend and his wife, in a little apartment over the shop of an optical instrument maker in the Rue Bonaparte. The three quitted the place instantly. She wrote me a letter in which she said she had not known that I regarded my work for her as a slavery, but that she would no longer be a burden upon my life. Miss Imboden, that was the last word I had from her and the last I ever heard of her. I went twice to Europe in search of her. I put personals into the Paris edition of the New York *Herald*, but all to no purpose. Then I came home again, hopeless, despondent, and with bitterness in my heart. I thought at first that I hated all human beings. But about that time I met Field Stanfield, and —

well, you know how impossible it is not to love that man. Then I got to thinking about it all. It was Stanfield who set me thinking by the insistent challenge he gave — or still more by the insistent challenge he, in his own person, was to my pessimistic philosophy. Then came Miss Gerard into my life, and with the aid of Stanfield's satirical and Socratic questionings I began to see that after all I didn't think so ill of my fellow-men and women as I had thought I did. But I came very near falling in love with Miss Gerard, and that set me thinking again. I began to remember that little wife of mine, and somehow I remembered her only tenderly, and not as the burden upon my life that in my brutal argumentativeness I had taught her to believe. A great longing came over me to find her — I had cynically given that up — and to be reconciled with her. Her disappearance from the little apartment in the Rue Bonaparte had not really deceived me. I realized that she might be suffering poverty, for from the hour of her disappearance she had drawn no sou from the Paris bankers to whom I continued to transmit her monthly allowance of funds, but I knew in my soul that she had not fallen into degradation. I knew that she was pure and clean, and in her strange way loyal to me.

“Now, not very long ago I suddenly and quite unexpectedly came into possession of a considerable, though not at all a great, fortune through the death of a relative whom I had never seen. About the same time two novels of mine achieved unexpected success, and on the strength of it my boys’ books began to sell satisfactorily. I found myself no longer in need of my newspaper earnings, and as newspaper work has many disagreeable limitations, I decided to abandon it. My next thought was that I would go abroad and search again for my wife, and see if devotion might not again win her love to me. But that is useless. I have already exhausted every means of finding her, and so I must sit still and bear the consequences of my own grievous fault in thus driving her into hiding and perhaps into poverty and suffering.”

Miss Imboden rose and, approaching the young man, took his hand in her own, and looking him in the eyes said:—

“You have all of sympathy that I know how to give to any human being who suffers. But in one respect I do not share your feeling in the least. Your self-reproach is utterly uncalled for. You have done all that a loyal and loving man could have done under the circumstances. You have

been generously self-sacrificing far beyond the common — far beyond anything that could be expected of any man. I will not wound you by saying that the wife you love so much was in fault, but I will say that no shadow of fault lies upon your soul in this matter. You must learn to understand that and to recognize it. You are too strong a man and far too good a man to be sacrificed to circumstances in that fashion. You must put away from you the thought that you have done aught of wrong in this matter or that you have in any way failed to do all that was possible to you. You must renew your belief in yourself. You are a man of rare gifts, and you have no right to neglect their use because of what others have done. You must take new courage. You must face life fairly. You must do at your best the work that God has given you the capacity to do. Be a man, Joe Blake! Be the strong, earnest, humanly helpful man that you were born to be! Remember Edward Everett Hale's wise instruction, to 'look up and not down, forward, not backward, out and not in, and to lend a hand.' So shall you make a proper use of your character and ability."

XXV

MISS IMBODEN'S ARRANGEMENTS

MISS IMBODEN had reasons enough of her own for not saying anything at that time of certain plans that were beginning to form themselves in her mind. As a woman, she did not share Joe Blake's blindly loyal confidence in his errant wife. She was not so certain as he was that the woman was true. She instantly determined to find her, and to find out what the facts of her life were. She was sure she knew how to accomplish this, but she would give no hint of her purpose to Joe Blake, for the reason that if she should find the woman unworthy, she meant to let her remain lost, telling Blake nothing of her discovery. "In such a case," she argued, "it will be far better that he should never know. The truth would hurt him cruelly."

There was another thing. Miss Imboden was distinctly displeased with Field Stanfield, and her displeasure was all the greater because she could

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own soul respecting it. The very thought of it made her blush behind the thick veil she was putting on preparatory to her shopping expedition. On the other hand, her interest was keen in the work that she and Stanfield were together doing, and somehow she felt that her daily association with him was educative to herself. Yes, that was it, she was sure. She regretted to lose that educative influence. On the whole, she entered Morrison's parlors in a perturbed condition of mind that was quite unusual with her, and poor Morrison had no little trouble in finding out precisely what she wanted in the way of wraps and gowns.

No sooner had Winifred left upon her shopping mission than Miss Imboden turned to the telephone and called up Mrs. Calory, who had been Winifred's teacher. To her she said:—

"You told me the other day that you needed a sea voyage and were planning to go to Bermuda. I urged you to take a longer voyage, and you thought you couldn't afford the expense. Now I suddenly find it necessary to send Winifred to the other side on an important mission of my own, and I don't want her to go alone. Why can't you go with her at my expense? It will be a very great favor to me if you will."

Presently, in response to queries from the other end of the wire, Miss Imboden said:—

“On the *Touraine* on Saturday morning. Yes, really it will be a very great favor to me. No, I didn't manufacture the thing to give you the trip. I really have something exceedingly important for Winifred to do over there, and she will badly need you as a chaperone. Thanks. That's good. Well, be ready for sailing on Saturday morning. We'll call for you at a quarter to seven and all drive to the steamer together. I'll send a man up in the meantime to see about your trunks. Good-by.”

Miss Imboden's next care was to send a man to the steamship offices to secure the necessary accommodations.

It was Miss Imboden's habit to manage things in this rapid-fire fashion, so that those with whom she had dealings were not apt to be too greatly astonished by her gentle peremptoriness. Perhaps she had inherited her business ways from the father who had bequeathed to her the millions he had made by similarly prompt and commanding methods.

She next sent for Joe Blake. She wanted to consult him, she said, about certain of her chari-

table efforts that presented difficulties which she thought his newspaper knowledge of conditions might enable her to solve. The two were in close sympathy now, and Blake was easily led to talk of his wife and of his own affairs after the pair had disposed of the charity problems. When at last Joe Blake took his leave, Miss Imboden knew several things that she had wanted to know. She knew that Joe Blake's wife was named Carolyn. She knew the name of the artist with whose wife Carolyn Blake had lived in the Rue Bonaparte in Paris. She had learned the date of the wife's disappearance, and, most important of all, she had learned through what bank in New York Joe Blake had made his remittances to Paris.

On his departure she ordered a carriage and drove at once to that bank. By good luck the bank happened to be one in which Miss Imboden was not only the largest individual stockholder, but the owner of an absolute majority of the stock. As a consequence of this fact, she was shown at once into the directors' room on her arrival at the bank, and the cashier came to her for a private conference. She learned from him all the rest that she needed to know. She secured from him cancelled drafts bearing Carolyn Blake's indorse-

ment, together with a good deal of other information that she wanted as to the Parisian house through which the drafts had been cashed, and other details of the sort.

That evening she gave Winifred her instructions.

"I am sending you abroad," she said, "to find Mr. Blake's wife."

"Mr. Blake's wife!" exclaimed the girl. "Why — I thought he was a single man, and I hoped he was going to marry Deborah."

"So did I, a little while ago," answered the older woman. "But —" and she proceeded to relate all that she knew of the story. Then she added: "If she is anywhere in Continental Europe, you can find her by the free use of money properly placed with the police — 'for expenses of the search,' you must always say in offering money. You remember that when you and I crossed on a French steamer, we had a slip of paper left in our staterooms, which we were required to fill out 'for the information of the police.' We had to give our names and addresses, our birthplaces, our ages, our immediate destination, etc. All those slips are placed in the hands of the French police before the ship is allowed to land her passengers, and from the hour of landing every

movement of every foreigner in France is observed and recorded. And if the stranger passes from France to any other continental country, the record is transmitted to the authorities of that country, and a like observation is kept upon the foreigner wherever he may go. It is unobtrusive and in no way annoying to any honest person. You are never asked a question about yourself after you fill out and sign that slip in your stateroom. The keepers of the hotels in which you live, or the owners of the apartments you rent, furnish all needed information as to your future movements."

"Were we watched and followed up in that way when we went abroad before?"

"Yes, certainly."

"It seems to me horrible."

"But why? We were in no way molested. So long as we were law-abiding people nobody interfered with our perfect freedom to go and come at will."

"Yes, of course, but —"

"But what?"

"Why, I like our free American way much better."

"So do I. But just now their foreign way will serve our purpose well. You are to go to Paris—

you and Mrs. Calory—and stay at the Hotel de l'Athénée, in the Rue Scribe, just behind the opera. I have cabled to reserve a suite of rooms on the entresol for you. When you get settled there, I want you to put yourself in communication with the police. They will send a gentlemanly person in plain clothes to see you. You are to tell him what you want—to find Carolyn Blake, who lived—you've got the dates in your notebook—at number 11 Rue Bonaparte with the artist Bonsard and his wife. You will let the police personage understand that you stand ready to furnish all the money that may be needed in making the inquiry, and that you desire simply to learn the young woman's present whereabouts, without informing her in any way of the inquiry. When you find where she is, you can go thither and find out what her way of living is and all the rest of it and cable me. I'll give you a little code so that you need mention no real names in your cablegrams. Now, dear, you must go to bed. You are overwrought, tired, and hollow-eyed. I don't like to see you so."

"It is nothing," the girl replied. "It is only that in the excitement of these hurried arrangements I haven't slept well."

She started to leave the room, but presently she stopped and, looking into the older woman's eyes, as if to surprise there the answer she expected, said: —

“By the way, I didn't see Dr. Stanfield to-day. I wanted to make some suggestions to him about certain of our cases. Have you seen him?”

“Yes. He came in while you were out, but he was suddenly called to Washington in consultation over an extremely critical case. His practice and his fame are rapidly extending, you know. He will return to-morrow, but not until after you have sailed. You'd better leave your messages for him with me.”

The girl stood irresolute for a moment, as if half dazed. Then she gathered up her resolution and replied: —

“It is just as well. I am always advising him concerning things that he knows a great deal more about than I do. But please tell him that I really wish he would look very carefully into the way in which that Mrs. Oskovitch in Goerck Street is feeding her baby. Tell him I fear she will kill it if he doesn't interfere.”

Perhaps it may be worth while to record here that there wasn't any Mrs. Oskovitch in Goerck

Street or anywhere else, and that Miss Imboden, who was in the habit of keeping herself minutely informed concerning her charity patients, was perfectly aware of the fact. But the mention of the fictitious personage and of her fictitious baby served to cover Winifred's retreat, and Miss Imboden was entirely satisfied.

On the other hand, Miss Imboden thought it entirely unnecessary to say anything to Winifred concerning the amount of telegraphing and long-distance telephoning she had done in order to get Field Stanfield called to Washington for that consultation. Miss Imboden had many resources, and she knew how to utilize them.

XXVI

FIELD STANFIELD'S PERPLEXITIES

WHEN Field Stanfield came back from Washington on a train that arrived early on Saturday morning, he went at once to his office, where he found his daily company of patients awaiting him. Miss Imboden had reckoned upon this. She knew that he would be detained at his office until eleven o'clock, the hour of his daily call upon herself. It was not Miss Imboden's habit to leave important things to chance.

When he called, a little after eleven, Miss Imboden said to him: —

“Miss Gerard will assist you for a time. I sent Winifred to Europe this morning.”

Stanfield stood as if stunned by a blow. Quickly recovering himself, he said: —

“That is altogether well. She needs rest and a sea voyage. Her nerves have been a good deal disturbed of late.”

Miss Imboden did not reply. Often she adopted that means of compelling her interlocutor to talk on without questioning. She was convinced that in that way it was sometimes possible to draw more out of a person than by direct inquiry.

As she sat still, saying nothing, Stanfield felt himself obliged to take up the conversation. And yet he was at a loss to know what to say. He felt that he could not explain the relations between himself and Winifred. And yet he felt that Miss Imboden's attitude, and especially her present silence, distinctly challenged him to such explanation. Presently he said:—

"I wish I might have seen her before she sailed."

"To what end? What would you have said to her?"

"I don't know. Perhaps nothing."

Again Miss Imboden sat silent, leaving it to him to renew the conversation. After a period of silence he broke forth:—

"Miss Imboden, I am in a terrible perplexity. I am impaled on both horns of a dilemma of honorable obligation, and I don't know what I should do."

"Perhaps I ought to understand that," Miss Imboden replied, "but I do not. Could you explain?"

"Not now," he answered, looking at his watch. "I have an important consultation to attend, and it would require several hours for me to tell you all the things that have a bearing upon the matter. Can you not give me an evening appointment after I shall have finished with the patients that come to me every evening for consultation?"

"Are there many of them?" she asked, not heeding his request.

"Yes, anywhere from twenty to fifty, or even more."

"Are they my patients — people whom I have asked you to treat?"

"No. They are mainly people who pay their own way, and in very many cases I must follow up their office visits by attending them at their homes."

"Some of them are well-to-do?"

"Yes — most of them. And some of them are even wealthy, though the wealthy ones usually come in the morning, not in person, but in the form of servants, asking me to call upon them in their own homes. You see —"

"Yes, I see. Then your practice, quite independently of the poor people whom I send you to visit, is a reasonably satisfactory one? Pardon me. That question is not an impertinent one, though it may seem so to you. I have a reason for asking it, which I think you would approve if you could know what it is, as you cannot."

"Miss Imboden, no question you could ask concerning my affairs could seem to me impertinent or in any way intrusive. I answer you frankly that, quite apart from my visits to your invalids, my practice has become so large that I would take an assistant if I could."

"Why can you not?"

"Because the great majority of my patients would take the visit of an assistant in my stead as an affront, or at the least as a mark of indifference on my part."

"Do you know the young man you would choose as your assistant if it were practicable for you to have one?"

"Yes. He is —"

"You need not tell me. I know nothing about such things. It is enough for me to know that you approve him. Why should you not employ him at once? He can do most of the work among

my poor, though in every extreme case I shall ask you to give your personal attention. In that way you will be left free to give a closer attention to your personal practice, and I suppose he might assist you somewhat even in that?"

"Yes, certainly. There are many times when all that I need is a report of progress in the case of patients whom I personally visit each day. An assistant might save much of my time by paying these intermediate visits."

"Then why not engage your young man at once? The practice I give you will surely cover his share, and you tell me your other practice is sufficient to employ all your own time?"

"Yes, but —"

"But what, please?"

"Why, I have become enormously interested in these poor patients of yours, and, frankly, I don't want to give up that work. My other work yields me all the money I need, and more. I'm a bachelor, you know, and a man of good habits. So I don't need half the money I am earning. But a man who has any stuff in him doesn't want to live for money alone. I want to do some good in the world."

"But you'll not always remain a bachelor. The

real men in this world rarely do. And you must look out for the time when you will have a family to support, and boys and girls to educate."

"I think I shall never marry," said Stanfield, with a note of sadness in his voice. "Even if I do, my practice, apart from your work, will be ample for the support of a family. You see, it is only the beginning that is difficult, and thanks to you I've got a long way past the beginning. Still, as I said awhile ago, I don't want to divorce myself from the superb work of compassionate charity in which you first engaged me, and in which Winifred is so deeply interested."

"What has Winifred to do with the matter, and what is Winifred to you, anyhow?"

Field Stanfield found himself unable to answer. And yet some answer to this challenge seemed to be necessary. After a time he said: —

"I can't answer your question offhand. Yes, I can, too," he corrected. "I am deeply in love with Winifred, and I am not free to tell her so, or to ask for her love in return."

"But why not? You are a man able to take a wife. You have just told me so. I cannot say what Winifred's answer to you would be if you asked her to be your wife, and under no con-

ceivable circumstances would I influence that answer by so much as a word or a look. But I see no reason why you should not ask the question of her when she returns — if she ever returns.”

That last phrase startled Stanfield, and for the moment he looked aghast.

“Surely she has not gone abroad to reside permanently?” he queried.

“She is perfectly free to do so if she wishes,” answered Miss Imboden. “I cannot say how long she may choose to remain abroad. At any rate, no consideration relating to you need have weight, for you have just told me you were not free to tell her of your own love or to ask her love in return. You must go now. You have a consultation to attend, and I have much to do. Good morning.”

With that the stately lady swept out of the sun parlor, leaving Stanfield to go about his business with what composure he could command.

He was a resolute man, and in spite of his shaken condition of nerves he put aside his first impulse, which was to ask some brother surgeon to go to the consultation in his stead that day. Bravely and firmly he went to his task, which was one of extreme delicacy and risk, involving a human

life by a very narrow margin, for it was decided that he should operate. With a steady hand and a resolute command of his nerves, he did his work successfully, and when it was over he found himself satisfied with it. But he was by no means satisfied with himself or with his situation. He felt, for one thing, that Miss Imboden was displeased with him, and no other feeling could have given him greater discomfort than that. This woman had given him his chance in life; but far above and beyond that she had been to him such a friend as he had never known in all his life — a friend who understood him and sympathized with all his aspirations, all his impulses. Her friendship had come to him, too, at a time when the life-long yearning of his soul for such friendship was at its extremest height — a time when he felt his peculiar isolation from his fellow-beings as a burden that he could not much longer bear without bowed shoulders and a halting step. It was a grievous distress to him, therefore, to feel that he had incurred this friend's displeasure, and it did not relieve him in the least that he knew the reason of it all.

But Field Stanfield was a resolute man and a man of resource. He was in the habit of think-

ing quickly, deciding promptly, and acting confidently upon his decisions. But there was a safety valve of caution in his nature, which forbade him to make any decision of moment until after he had fully thought the matter out. So when his operation was over and he had watched his patient until he was satisfied of the result, he summoned a cab, entered it, and directed the driver to take him slowly through the park. "Drive till I tell you to do something else," he said. "And don't jolt me."

For an hour he drove and thought. At the end of that time he knew perfectly what his own state of mind was, or as he put it, "I have made a diagnosis."

He was no longer in love with Carolyn Blake, if he had ever been so. He could easily remember the perturbation of spirit into which that young woman's peculiar fascination had thrown him at the time of their association; but try as he might he could not make the memory of her reproduce the old feeling.

"It was only a passing fancy, a temporary fascination," he said. "This other is different — this love of Winifred."

Nevertheless, there was the fact of the letter he

had written to Carolyn, and with an almost morbid sense of the obligation a man assumes toward a woman when in any fashion he tells her he loves her, Field Stanfield felt that until that matter should be cleared away he was not free in honor to offer love to any other woman in the world.

Had his bringing up been of a less solitary sort, he might have seen that when Carolyn ran away from Paris on receipt of his letter and persistently hid herself from his sight, she in effect rejected his suit and completely absolved him from all obligation to her. That thought occurred to him, indeed, as his cab trundled slowly over the smooth driveways of the parks, but instantly arose the question: —

“Did she receive my letter at all? It was sent by a commissionnaire, and he was paid in advance for his service, and told that there would be no answer. May it not be that when he reached the apartment in the Rue Bonaparte he found it already deserted? Would he not in that case destroy my letter and say nothing about it? He had been paid for carrying it. Why should he bother to go back across the Seine to tell me it had not been delivered?

“And had I not already in a thousand ways

intimated to Carolyn what my attitude toward her was? Was she not justified in growing impatient of my delay to declare my sentiment? Isn't it probable that her flight was made in disgust of my laggardliness and before my letter could reach her?"

The outcome of all this thinking was to convince him that he was bound hand and foot, and that he could honorably release himself only by finding Carolyn Blake and coming to an understanding with her. In the meanwhile he would "have it out" with Miss Imboden, and let her know what his situation was.

He ordered the cabman to drive at once to his office, and on the way he formulated his plans somewhat, though not completely.

"I simply cannot leave my practice now," he reflected. "If I want my front-door lock repaired, it is far cheaper for me to hire a locksmith to do the work than to do it myself, though I really believe I could do it as well as he can. In the same way it is far cheaper for me to employ another to find Carolyn Blake than to make the search myself, abandoning my practice in the meanwhile."

On reaching his office, he went to the 'phone

and called up a detective agency whose chief he happened to know. He asked that that chief and no other should come to him at once.

When the detective came, Stanfield placed in his hands a memorandum of everything he knew concerning Carolyn Blake, and commissioned him to send a capable man to Europe to search for her.

"Send one who speaks French fluently," he said. "Otherwise the robbers over there will delay him fatally by pretending not to understand in order to extort tips for the brightening of their intellects."

While waiting for the detective chief's visit, Stanfield had telephoned Miss Imboden, asking for a conference that evening. For reasons of her own, which she did not bother to explain, that gentlewoman had replied that she could not give him that evening, but would be free to receive him twenty-four hours later.

He had to content himself with that.

Then came Field Stanfield's temptation.

XXVII

FIELD STANFIELD'S TEMPTATION

AMONG Field Stanfield's patients was one Franz Leitz. He was the son of an absurdly rich brewer, whose wealth he had inherited when his father had drunk all he could of his own beer and had been called to his final account.

The older man, having a literary impulse, had written many articles, pamphlets, and the like, to show in what degree the sale and use of beer had ministered to the cause of temperance by inducing men to drink light instead of heavy liquors. But while putting forth his pamphlets, he had furnished the money for the setting up of many saloons under the Raines-law system, in which far more of strong drink than of beer was sold.

The younger man had been educated at Columbia first and then at Heidelberg, where he had taken his doctor's degree in philosophy. He was a young man of unusual taste in art and literature

— especially in literature; but as he put the case to Field Stanfield one day, he was cursed with an inheritance of “too much money to let me do anything.” He had explained by saying:—

“I wrote a volume of human-interest stories a while ago, and another volume of critical essays. If your friend Mr. Blake had written those books, they would have been accepted or rejected upon their merits by the publisher. But as I wrote them, and as the publisher knew I had more money than I could conveniently dispose of, he promptly proposed that I should myself pay the cost of their publication.”

“What did you do?” asked Stanfield.

“I directed my man to light a hard-coal fire in my grate,” answered the other. “It was mid-summer and the mercury was toying with the nineties; but my man long ago reconciled himself to the idea that he was serving a harmless lunatic whose whimsies it was his duty to respect, and so he lighted the fire I had ordered and into it I fed the two manuscripts, sheet by sheet.”

“But why did you do that? Why didn’t you try some other publisher?”

“Why, you see it would have been of no use. Everybody knows how much money I have, and

so, even if they had been published, everybody would have passed my books by with the cynical conviction that I had myself paid for their publication. The critics would have shrewdly suspected that I had hired somebody else to write them. No, it was better to burn the manuscripts. They weren't the sort of thing that fills a long-felt want. At best they were merely clever, and there are lots of cleverer things on the market.

"Inherited wealth is a tremendous handicap, and I am not strong enough to win with that load on my back. I have given up all serious endeavor, and perhaps it is just as well. Whatever success I might achieve in literature or art would be so much of success filched from others who have need of it, as I have not. I am trying to serve mankind now by closing up saloons. You know most of the gin mills are 'backed' by the brewers, who put up the money to pay for their fixtures and their stock in trade, on condition that they shall sell no beer except that made by the brewer who in each case 'backs' the saloon. Now, when I came into my inheritance, I found that there were a great many saloons maintained by the money my father had lent to men in that way. My first

thought was to call in all those loans, though they pay six per cent interest, while it is difficult to get four per cent in any other way. But presently I saw clearly that if I did that I should do more harm than good. So long as my money keeps a saloon in existence, my money is indirectly doing harm. But if I call in a loan of that kind, I may bankrupt a poor fellow who has a wife and children to support, and in that way do a greater harm directly than the continued existence of the saloon would indirectly do.

“My attention was called to this aspect of the matter by my very first attempt to call in a loan. There was a little beer place on which I had a mortgage for about twelve hundred dollars. As the time limit had expired, I decided to call in the loan. Then there came to me the owner of the place. She was a widow with five children to take care of. Her husband had established this little beer business on the capital my father had lent him, and when he died the business was all that he left to his widow. The place was as harmless as any place of the kind can be. It furnished beer to the laboring population round about — people all their lives accustomed to drink beer with their dinners — and there was

little else to its trade. When the poor woman explained to me how disastrous the closing of her little business would be, I changed my mind. Instead of calling in the loan, I reduced the interest on it to three per cent, making it thirty-six dollars a year instead of seventy-two dollars. Then I spent the thirty-six dollars in Christmas presents for the poor woman and her little people.

“You see, Stanfield, we can’t always settle things of that kind by the rule of thumb. But I have foreclosed on a good many saloons, nevertheless. I set some shrewd fellows to investigate, and in every case in which I found a saloon ministering to vice I called in the loan, sometimes with the effect of closing the place, but oftener only with the result that some other brewer took the loan and put his beer in instead of mine.

“It’s a difficult problem all round. Take the question of brewing beer at all, for instance. I don’t want to make beer. I have more money now than I can use, and I’d like to close up the establishment. But that wouldn’t lessen by a single glassful per annum the amount of beer drunk in this city or in this country or in the world. There isn’t a brewer living who cannot

increase his product to any extent that he may find profitable. If I quit, it will mean only that the others will sell enough more beer to make good. Then again, if I quit, what am I to do with my plant? It is adapted to no other purpose than the brewing of beer, and if I sell it, somebody else will go on putting it to that use. It's a blind alley, I tell you, Stanfield."

"Yes," answered the doctor, "it is a blind alley, and my experience leads me to think that nearly all our efforts to better our fellow-men, whether positively or negatively, lead us into blind alleys."

With the mutuality of interest which scholarship creates between educated men, Field Stanfield and Franz Leitz had become in a way comrades. The sympathy between them was not very close, but it was sufficiently close to enable them to enjoy each other's society. They saw a good deal of each other, for the reason that Stanfield was the personal physician of Franz Leitz.

Leitz had at one time been enormously ambitious, both of scholarship and of athletic achievement. During his college days, and afterward in Germany, he had burned the candle at both ends, overworking himself as a student and equally overworking his physical capacities as an athlete.

The necessary result had followed. He was now a nervous wreck, who required the daily attention of a physician, and for whom the physician could do nothing of lasting value.

Stanfield had urged the young man to make a long voyage, as the best possible way of restoring his health, and on this day he sent a note to the doctor by the hand of a valet, saying:—

“I think I am ready now to take your prescription of a long voyage, and I very much want to see you about it. Won’t you arrange to dine with me this evening, so that we may talk the whole matter over? There will be no other guests, and as soon as the cigars are placed upon the table I’ll banish the servant to the nether regions of the house, so that there shall be no interruption to our talk. My man knows how to ‘break the connection’ so that the door-bell shall not ring after we sit down to meat, however vigorously the unwelcome visitor may press the button outside. Please send word that you will come.”

As Miss Imboden had postponed Stanfield’s visit to her until the next evening, he was free to visit this friend at the dinner hour, except that he must in some way meet his patients during office hours. It seemed to him a good chance to

test the quality of the young physician whom he thought of taking for his assistant. Sending for him at once, he said : —

“I want you, if you will, to take my place here to-night and see my patients. You may explain to them that I have been called away for an important consultation with a patient who is going abroad.”

Having thus freed himself for the evening, Stanfield went to the sombrely luxurious home of Franz Leitz. As soon as he entered, the servant proceeded to disconnect the electric door-bell from the button outside, and presently the two young men sat down to dinner, in no fear of interruption.

During the meal they talked of indifferent things. It was not until the butler's man had been finally dismissed that the host broached the subject concerning which he wished to talk with Stanfield.

“Some months ago,” he said, “you urged me to take a long sea voyage, and I've been thinking of it ever since. But in these days of ocean greyhounds there aren't any long sea voyages. The demoniacal impulse of haste and hurry has reduced the Atlantic to a six-days' ferry, and even

the voyage to the Mediterranean occupies less than ten days. Besides, it's broken at Gibraltar, where you've got to go ashore while the ship coals. Of course, one might cross the Pacific, but you've got to cross the continent before you get to the Pacific, and you know how tedious that is. My nerves would never stand a six-days' journey by rail, even in a private car. So I've decided upon another plan. I've bought a steamship of my own — a five or six thousand ton boat, of excellent model and construction. She can make seventeen knots if she is pushed, but fourteen or fifteen knots is her usual, easy-going speed. I've had her thoroughly overhauled and refitted, particularly as to her inside, until I think she is now as comfortable a yacht as there is afloat. My plan is to sail in her for a year or two, going around the world, perhaps, and, at any rate, going into all the out-of-the-way nooks and corners of the world. There won't be any programme. We'll just go where we like, stay there as long as we like, and when we get tired of one place go to any other that we may have a fancy for. In brief, my plan is to loaf all over the world. Now what I want is to have you go with me. Of course we'll pick up pleasant people here and

there, who will accompany us on special trips, but you and I will constitute the permanent ship's company, unless there is somebody else you'd like to take along with you. If there is, he'll be welcome. Say that you'll go."

There was to Field Stanfield a specially alluring aspect to this proposal. There are times in every man's life, no matter how strong the man may be, when the one overwhelming desire of his soul is to "go clear away," break all his relations with active life, and be at peace. This was such a time with Field Stanfield, and for the moment the prospect held out to him was alluring. But Field Stanfield was too strong a man in all his purposes to yield to the temptation.

"I cannot," he said to Leitz. "I have my work to do — my practice, you know."

"I'll buy your practice before we start at a price that will free you for all your life from the necessity of ever doing anything again for money."

Stanfield started to reply, but his friend interrupted: —

"Let me finish, please. You see, I haven't a human being dependent upon me in all the world, or a human being for whom I am under the smallest obligation to provide. I am ridicu-

lously rich, and the confounded brewery goes on making money faster than I can get rid of it, in spite of all I have done to injure its business. It really makes no difference to me what price I pay for anything I want. It only alters some figures on a sheet of paper, and as I never look at the sheet of paper, it doesn't matter to me."

"Listen to me," said Stanfield. "I happen to be just now in a position which renders your offer a very alluring one, and if I could sink other things in a purely selfish consideration of my own welfare, I should gladly accept it. But that I cannot do. I cannot take a purely commercial view of my own life. I have a certain equipment for the doing of work in the world. There are others who need me, and I am bound to consider them. As for money, I am easily earning quite all that I need, and there is no reason to suppose that my earning capacity will decrease. You could make me wholly independent of work for all time to come by a mere stroke of your pen. But in that case I should be as miserable as you are. I should have no responsibility in life, no work to do, and without responsibility and work no man can be happy, unless he is utterly selfish.

And wholly apart from the question of my personal happiness, think what an unworthy life it is to which you invite me. If I were to accept your offer, it would mean for me a life of wholly selfish indulgence and uselessness. I am utterly unwilling to lead such a life. I had rather take a place as dishwasher in a second-rate hotel."

Leitz sat silent and meditating for a time. At last he said:—

"I suppose you are right, and it means that again I have run into a blind alley. There are lots of men who would be glad to go with me on much less favorable terms than these I have suggested for you, but they aren't the sort of men I want for my intimates. That's just it. Fellows like you, fellows that are worth while, simply won't give up their lives to mere ease and enjoyment, and as for the fellows who would be glad of the chance to do so, why, they are constitutionally worthless. They have no convictions, no earnestness, no real character. They would doubtless amuse me for a month or two, but after that I should tire of them, and as it would hardly do to maroon them somewhere, I should have to endure their daily presence as something that could breed nothing but loathing in my soul. It's

another blind alley. All alleys are blind to the man who has no need to make money."

In his turn Stanfield sat for a time in silence. Then he said:—

"It is so in many ways, particularly in those cases in which we seek in charity to benefit our fellow-men. I suppose that the only real way for a man to live with advantage to himself or to others is for him to do something useful. That is what I had in mind when I said what I did a while ago. The trouble with you is that you are free from the necessity of work. The old theology taught that the necessity of work was the primal curse, but it is nothing of the kind. Work is the one supremely necessary condition of human happiness—useful work of some kind. If I were you, I should find some work to do, if it were only to keep a poultry farm."

Presently the two friends parted, but a few months later Stanfield received a letter from Leitz, dated in Virginia. In it the young man wrote:—

"That poultry-farm suggestion of yours was excellent, and I am acting upon it. I have sold the yacht and bought an old plantation down here. I have stocked it with all sorts of poultry,

including a dozen or two dozen gaudy peafowls, that strut about my lawn idly exhibiting their wealth of resplendent tail feathers, and caricaturing the men and women who think to be made happy in idleness by the possession of wealth and by a lavish display of it. I have half a thousand hens and roosters, a pond whose surface is covered with my ducks and geese, and a flock of guinea-hens that wake me early every morning with their clamorous chatter. I never before realized how much of joy there is in being up and out in the early morning. Think of it! I'm out of doors before sunrise. I breakfast at seven o'clock, and I bring the hunger of a cartman to the table with me. But my specialty is turkeys. The turkey is such a foolish bird, you know, and in that respect so like the average human being. He is like him, also, in being useful in his humble way.

"But raising poultry is an art and a science. You'd be surprised to know how big a library of poultry lore I have accumulated here or how much I have learned from it. For when I set out to raise poultry, I decided to study the subject and learn all I could about it. It is excessively interesting. I find that nobody ever yet

did it as it should be done, for the simple reason that nobody ever went into the business who had a brewery and a hereditary fortune behind him. I have both. I can create ideal conditions for the prosperity of my fowls and for the improvement of breeds. There is a world of possibility in the thing. For example, I have already succeeded in stuffing a gobbler, while he is yet alive, till he weighs thirty-six pounds, and you are to carve him at your own table at Christmas.

“The best of all this is that I am, for the first time in years, well and happy. My nerves and my sight have so far improved that whenever I flush a flock of quails, — or partridges, as they call them here, — I can bring down one with each barrel. I want to assure you, Dr. Field Stanfield, that you never in your life gave a patient a wiser prescription than the poultry-farming one you gave me.”

This letter was written many months after the date fixed by Miss Imboden for Field Stanfield's visit to her for the purpose of explaining his situation. And during those months, many things had happened in the young physician's life.

XXVIII

A HURRY CALL FOR DR. STANFIELD

WHEN Miss Imboden, in fulfilment of her promise, told Deborah Gerard that Joe Blake was a married man whose wife had disappeared, she narrowly watched the girl's face, in expectation of something — she hardly knew what.

To her astonishment, Deborah replied in the calmest way possible: —

“Yes, I know. It is a terrible pity that he has lost his wife. Mr. Blake is so good a man.”

How she knew, the girl did not explain, and Miss Imboden asked no questions. It was not her habit to ask impertinent questions, and besides, she mistakenly thought she understood without asking any questions at all.

“Impulsive fellow that he is,” she reflected, “Joe Blake has revealed his secret to the girl without knowing it. At any rate, she is not distressed by the knowledge, and that is well.”

Deborah devoted herself with enthusiasm to her work, and when, after Joe Blake's confession, Miss Imboden sent Winifred to Europe, she gladly took up the additional tasks that the new arrangement placed upon her shoulders. In such work she had a peculiar capacity of service, for the reason that in her earlier work she had learned to know many cases of need among what Miss Imboden called "the well-to-do poor."

After Winifred had gone to Europe, Miss Imboden explained to Deborah:—

"I have sent Winifred abroad to find Joe Blake's wife if she can. But he is not to know a word of that, you understand. Neither is anybody else. Because you see, dear, until we find the girl and know in what fashion she is living, we cannot know whether it would be a happiness or a calamity for us to tell him of our search."

"I fully understand," answered the girl. "But if Mr. Blake's wife is quite innocent and simply poor, do you suppose he will take her back? Can he forgive her for her desertion? Can he be persuaded to believe that after all her fault was due to her youth and her flattered vanity, and that through it all she has been at heart a loyal and loving wife? Do you suppose he would

believe that? And do you suppose he still loves her, or could learn to love her again?"

There was a passionate earnestness in the girl's pleading questionings that seemed uncalled for by the occasion, and Miss Imboden somewhat wondered thereat. But she wisely asked no questions. Instead she said:—

"I know that Joe Blake loves and mourns his wife with all of sincerity and all of tenderness there is in his nature. If she could be restored to him, and it should appear that her error has been no worse than —"

"I understand," said the girl. "Go on."

"Well, if she could come back to him as the wife he lost through a misunderstanding, he would be as eager to welcome her as he was in the beginning to make her his wife."

"I am glad of that," said Deborah. "I hope she may yet be found."

Then the girl started out to make her round of visitations. Her routes were of her own choosing, as Winifred's had been, and on this occasion she walked across town to Sixth Avenue, where she took a north-bound surface car, from which she alighted a little way south of Central Park. Apparently she knew her way as she entered a

large, old-fashioned, and exceedingly ill-kept studio building, and went by elevator to the highest point reached by that convenience. Thence she climbed a flight of difficult stairs to the topmost floor of the artistic rookery.

Entering a little den there, she found a young woman busily engaged in giving a violin lesson to a little boy.

"Don't let me interrupt your work," Deborah said. "Go on with the lesson. I have plenty of time."

But the girl advanced to greet her visitor with more of genuine affection than might have been expected, and declaring the lesson at an end, proceeded to turn the boy out of the room and to lock the door — "so that we two may be alone together," she explained.

"You are not feeling well to-day?" asked Deborah.

"I am tired, that's all," said the other.

"No, it is not all. Is your rent paid?"

"Nearly all of it. You see —"

"Well, now can you give me some breakfast?"

The young woman looked hard at her interlocutor and then said: —

"I have nothing in the house."

"That means that you haven't had any breakfast. I know the symptoms. I have gone without breakfast myself. Now put on your hat and come with me."

The other woman protested that she was not hungry, but Deborah had learned something of Miss Imboden's peremptory methods. She did not listen to protestations. She looked for the other's hat and wrap instead, forced them upon her, opened the door, and said:—

"Come on."

A little later the two were seated at table in a little restaurant with an abundant breakfast before them. Deborah had breakfasted already, but it was her habit to eat little at the early morning meal, so that she was prepared now to encourage her friend by joining her in the taking of more substantial food.

The two had the place to themselves, except for the waitress, and Deborah had learned enough of Miss Imboden's methods to know how to dispose of her. She directed her to go and prepare a tomato salad, bidding her do the thing with her own hands, and let it remain on the ice for half an hour before serving it. "Half an hour, you understand — not a minute less," and she

slyly slipped a quarter into the serving maid's hand.

Then she turned to her companion and said abruptly:—

“Carolyn, your husband wants you. He has searched Europe for you, and there is another searching Europe again, practically at his instigation, though he does not know it. He loves you, I tell you, and your persistent refusal to reveal yourself to him is a cruelty and a wrong. You and I have long been friends—ever since that time a year ago when I was at the verge of starvation and you gave me dinner out of the proceeds of a violin lesson. Now I'm going to exercise the privilege of a long-time friend. I am going to tell you plainly that your course is all wrong, wronging yourself, wronging those who would be your friends, and, above all, wronging one of the noblest men God ever made,—your husband. I have faithfully kept your secret, but now I am going to reveal it—to him. I am going to tell him where you are and in what condition. I am going to summon him to your side and let love do the rest.”

“But he has no love left for me,” said the other. “How can he? I have killed all that by

my conduct and my cruelty. He loves you now, and you are better fitted —”

“Stop!” cried Deborah. “Let me tell you some facts. When Joe Blake began to fear that his chivalric treatment of me might mislead me into the belief that he loved me, he took extraordinary pains to inform me of the fact that he had a wife already and that he loved her with all his soul. Of course he did this through another and with all that kindly consideration which is instinctive with him. I knew the fact before, and I had known it for months, — ever since you and I became friends, — but he knew nothing of that. Carolyn, you mustn’t faint here. Come, we’ll go —”

But it was too late. The long overwrought and underfed woman had lost consciousness. Deborah understood at once that it would not be possible to remove her to her garret room, so she summoned the serving maid, secured a room above the restaurant, and had her friend carried to it and placed in bed. She soon recovered consciousness, but she was seemingly very ill, and Deborah took charge.

First of all, she went to the telephone in the restaurant below, called up Dr. Field Stanfield,

and asked him to come as speedily as possible to see a patient who needed the promptest attention. Then, securing the key to Carolyn's room, she sent the waitress to bring thence everything that might be needed. She did not yet communicate with Joe Blake. Now that he had quitted the newspaper office, she did not know how to reach him by telephone, and, further than that, she thought it wiser to invoke Stanfield's skilled judgment before subjecting her friend to a further emotional strain. But she called up Miss Imboden, to whom she hurriedly said:—

“I am with Carolyn Blake — Joe Blake's wife. She is very ill and I cannot leave her. I have telephoned for Dr. Stanfield.”

Then, without waiting for any questions that Miss Imboden might wish to ask, Deborah hung up the receiver and hurried to her friend's bedside.

Miss Imboden knew how to communicate with Joe Blake by telephone, if Deborah did not, and her first impulse was to do so, but she refrained. She wanted first to find out something more about Carolyn Blake and her manner of life. So, instead of summoning Blake, she rang up Dr. Field Stanfield's telephone and bade his servitor

take down a message, to be delivered to him the moment he should return to his office.

"Please come to me at once," her message ran, "or as soon after your return as you conveniently can."

XXIX

AFTER LONG YEARS

WHILE waiting for the doctor to come, Carolyn Blake rapidly regained her strength, and Deborah saw that she was not so ill as she had feared.

“I am not really ill at all,” Carolyn explained, sitting up in the bed. “It is only that I was very weak and faint. You see, I have had very few pupils of late, and some of them have not paid me as promptly as they might. Yesterday I paid as much of my rent as I could, and it took all the money I had, so that I had to go without any dinner. I thought I should have breakfast this morning, because the boy you saw taking his lesson always brings the price of his instruction when he comes to me. But he didn’t pay me to-day. I suppose he forgot it because you came in. I was very faint, and, well, what you said to me —”

“I understand, dear. But I’m going to scold

you. I haven't seen you for a week because I've been busy, but you have known how to reach me, and yet for more than a week you have been living on utterly insufficient food. I don't think it was kind, when you knew all the time that the gladdest kind of glad money was within my reach."

"But I could not think of accepting charity — still less of asking for it."

"I have learned to understand how false a pride that is," said Deborah, "especially in women. Charity means love, and all money provided by love is charity money. Yet nearly all the money women receive in life comes to them as a loving gift and not as money earned. But we won't discuss that now. I wonder when Dr. Stanfield will be here."

"Doctor who? Did you say Stanfield?" asked the young woman, springing up to a sitting posture in her bed.

"Yes. Dr. Field Stanfield. He is Miss Imboden's friend and one of the kindest men —"

"Did he live in Paris for a while?"

"I believe he did. But —"

"I do not need to see a doctor and I will not."
But it was too late. Deborah had told the

people below that Dr. Stanfield was expected, and had instructed them to show him up at once on his arrival. At the moment when Carolyn was protesting that she needed no physician, Dr. Stanfield was shown into the room. Deborah saw the look that passed between the two, and while she could not fully interpret it, she caught at least a hint of its meaning, and with that tact which women always manifest in such cases, but which men rarely show, she hastily said:—

“Now that you’ve come, Doctor, you’ll want to examine your patient, and I can safely leave her in your hands while I go below to attend to some rather pressing matters.”

With that she hurriedly left the room, and Stanfield stood face to face with Carolyn Blake. There was embarrassment for him as well as for her in the situation, but to his own surprise he was able easily to master it. There came to his aid the knowledge that was already his, that all the fascination this woman had once exercised over him had ceased to be—that he was no longer in love with her, if indeed he had ever been so, which he was disposed to doubt. To her relief, in like manner, came a realizing sense

of the change that had taken place in their relations, and she rejoiced to discover quickly how complete that change had been in his case.

"It is a long time since we met," he said. "I am sorry that it is your illness which calls for our meeting now. Tell me about that."

"I am not really ill, Doctor," she answered. "It is only that I have been a good deal overtaxed in my strength of late, and — well, I didn't eat my dinner last night, and I suppose I was faint."

After a few more questions concerning her physical condition, Field Stanfield said: —

"I wish you would tell me all about how you have been living since I saw you last. It may help me to advise you."

The young woman broke at once into the story.

"You see when you knew me in Paris, I was called Mademoiselle. That was because I was so young that everybody thought me unmarried, and in many ways it was convenient to let the mistake go without correction. It would have been difficult to explain why so young a wife was living in Europe while her husband was living in America."

"Then you are a married woman? And you

were so when you lived in the Rue Bonaparte?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes. Then, as now, I was the wife of a man who — as I learn from Deborah, though she does not know that you and I ever met — has since become your most intimate friend. I mean Joe Blake."

Stanfield said nothing for a while. For the first time it occurred to him that this woman's name was Blake, and for the first time he understood what Joe Blake had meant when he had said that it would be a crime for him to fall in love with Deborah, "and a felony to marry her." After a little he asked: —

"But why were you masquerading as an unmarried woman? And why were you separated in that way from your husband? Surely Joe Blake is not a man that any right-minded wife would wish to leave."

"It is a sad story," the young woman answered, weeping gently and not chokingly now. "I'd like to tell you the whole of it if I may because you love the man I love with all my soul."

"Go on," he said.

"First of all," she began, "I understand many

things now that once I didn't understand. I was only eighteen years of age when I was married. I was passionately devoted to music, and I had a certain manual dexterity that enabled me to play the violin cleverly. Joe Blake was an open-hearted, open-minded man, who wanted above all things to make me happy, and who, next to that, wanted to make every friend of mine welcome in our little home. So all my musical friends — no, I mean all the musical people who called themselves my friends — used to come to our place every night and we talked music and made music incessantly. Worse still, they flattered me and praised me and applauded me until my head was turned. I can see plainly enough now that my husband, who did not care for music of any except the simplest sort, was distressed by all this, but most of all by the fact that the music and the music chatter robbed him of my society in an unjust degree.

“I can see, too, as I look back upon that time, how unjust I was to him in other ways. As he knew nothing about music, of course, he was practically ruled out of our conversations. If he tried to divert the talk in any way to other subjects, some one of the musical enthusiasts would promptly

interrupt him in a way that was distinctly insulting, particularly as they were guests in his own house. I ought to have seen this. I ought to have resented it. I ought to have made those people — those cattle I feel like calling them — understand that above and beyond everything else I was Joe Blake's wife, and the mistress of his house, and that no one who could not respect him and recognize his mastery there could come there at all. But I was a silly girl, flattered, excited, bewildered, and persuaded to think myself a musical genius unhappily married to a philistine. I know now, though I did not know it then, that I have no musical genius at all. I'll tell you about that presently. My husband believed in me and let me go abroad to study for six months. The time was extended to a year, and then to two years.

“As people over there always took me for a young girl, I let them make the mistake. I did not realize how wrong that might be to others. I did not think of the possibility that some such man as you, thinking me an unmarried woman, might fall in love with me. I was simply music mad, and I had no musical capacity to justify the music madness. I did not think of the dan-

ger there might be to others till your letter came. In my vanity and conceit I had accepted all your attentions, in the conviction that it was my musical gift, not myself, that you cared for.

“But just at that time something else happened. My husband had been loyally providing me with funds, and until that time he had generously consented to every postponement of my homecoming, in full faith that further study was necessary to the full development of my gifts. But about that time he began to protest. He was entirely right, of course; but with my head in the clouds, as it then was, I interpreted his protests as meaning a philistine lack of appreciation. I had learned to look forward to the time when my name should appear in big letters on the bills, when eager throngs would acclaim my appearance on the stage, and drown the echoes themselves as I should retire to the wings. It was my dream to join my husband again when my first great triumph in America should be over.

“Very well. He sensibly wrote me protesting that I ought to come back to him, and much else of the same entirely sane and sensible sort. In my conceit I resented and rejected his pleadings. In like conceit I decided that I was complete

mistress of my art and that I needed no further instruction from masters whom I had come to regard as immeasurably my inferiors. You see I was still only a very young woman, and I had been so far flattered that my judgment was honeycombed with vanity.

"When your letter came, I had already decided upon my course. I had decided to go to an impressario and offer myself for a great engagement, which, after a triumph in Europe, should be followed by an engagement for an all-conquering tour of America.

"You see, I was inflated with conceit, and I felt it a humiliation that my husband should put in a claim upon me which, he insisted, was superior to the claim of art. I had lived in an atmosphere of that sort of talk, and I was weak enough to catch the infection of it all. Anyhow, I resolved to have my career, and it was my dream that, at the culmination of it in a great American triumph, I should throw myself again into my husband's arms, covering him with the honor of being the husband of so great an artist, whose genius the whole world worshipped and applauded.

"At that time came your letter. It revealed to me the mistake I had made in allowing myself

to be regarded as an unmarried woman. I decided to solve both problems at once. I wrote to my husband, resenting his claim for my return to him, and I left you without any answer at all, except such as you might imply from my sudden desertion of the apartment in the Rue Bonaparte.

“Well, I went to an impresario and asked for what the French musical people call a ‘distinguished’ engagement. He bade me play, and I did so. Then he said:—

“‘You have no gift, mademoiselle, except a certain excellence of technique. You would be an excellent teacher of young pupils; but believe me, it would be impossible—recklessly, dangerously impossible—to bring you in front of the footlights as a violinist worthy of serious attention.’

“I haughtily took my leave, convinced that the man was a philistine who did not know genius when it presented itself. But after a dozen other impresarios in Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Florence had rendered a like verdict upon my skill, I began to understand. I was very nearly out of money by that time, for after my quarrel with my husband by letter I had entirely refused to draw any of the money he continued to send

to my Paris bankers for my use. But I had enough left to pay my way in the second cabin to New York, and I came back here, determined to make my way as a teacher by virtue of that excellence of technique which all my harsh critics among the impressarios had united in commending. That is all I need tell you, I think."

Early in her recital, Carolyn had caught sight of Deborah opening the door, and then seeming to retreat. She had instantly called to her: —

"Come in, Deb, there's nothing in my confession that you may not freely hear."

So when she finished, Deborah, as well as Stanfield, was sitting by her bedside as a listener.

"Permit me to say," said Stanfield, when she had finished, "that you have been behaving very foolishly. You ought to have returned to your husband immediately on your return to New York."

"Yes," said Deborah, "and so I have been telling her for months. It is only a silly pride that restrains —"

"There you are wrong," interrupted Carolyn. "It is not pride. I have no pride left in my make-up. It is humility instead, and an abiding sense of the wrong I have done to the best man

on earth. I heard a preacher once say of a death-bed repentance, that the sinner had burned out the candle of life in the service of the devil, and then had sought to placate God by blowing the snuff of it into his face. I have felt like that."

"Of all that," answered Stanfield, "you should have permitted Joe Blake to be the judge. You need not have intruded yourself upon him personally until invited to do so. A glance at the telephone book would have told you that his number is 1632 Grammercy." As Stanfield said this, he scowled meaningly at Deborah, and soon afterward she left the room, while Stanfield continued to talk.

She went to the telephone below and called up 1632 Grammercy. After a very brief conversation over the wire, she returned to the room, saying:—

"You have your round of visits to make, Doctor, and we have already detained you too long."

Stanfield understood and went.

Half an hour later a cab, furiously driven under impulse of a phenomenal tip for speed, drew up in front of the little restaurant. When

it came, Deborah was just leaving. An hour later, Carolyn Blake was comfortably lounging upon a divan in Joe Blake's rooms, and Joe Blake was sitting beside her holding her hand and now and then caressing her forehead.

"We'll set up a little home of our own," said Blake, presently, "as soon as I can find a suitable place. I'm fairly comfortable in my circumstances now, you know, Carolyn; but it takes a little time to find just what one wants in so big a city as this. In the meanwhile you can be comfortable in these rude bachelor quarters of mine, can't you?"

"With you I can be comfortable and happy anywhere," she answered. "And, besides, I like these rooms of yours. I have a very tender recollection of them."

"Why, what can you mean? Surely you know nothing of these rooms."

"I passed four happy days and nights in them a long time ago," answered the wife.

"But when and how? Surely, you are dreaming!"

"Not at all. I was the 'young friend' that Deborah brought hither to read to her while she copied from your books that time when you



AND JOE BLAKE WAS SITTING BESIDE HER HOLDING HER HAND.

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turned the place over to her. You remember it, don't you? She laughed and I cried a little over your clumsy devices for deceiving her — they were so generous and so blundering."

"Tell me about it all," he pleaded.

"Well, you had told her about a typewriting machine you had tried to learn to use and couldn't. Then you ordered in a machine of that kind, and told her it would be dusty. So you carefully sprinkled dust over it, by way of carrying out your fiction; but when Deborah tried to use it she found the key bars carefully tied together for safety, and attached to them was a receipt — dated that very day — for a month's rental. That is what made me think I had completely lost your love and that you loved Deborah. I have often seriously thought of jumping into the river so that you and she might be happy together."

"Well, for a man who has had a long and successful practice in the writing of fiction and newspaper stuff, — which is substantially the same thing, — I must say that I am the least-gifted liar I ever heard of. But how did you come to know Deborah at that time? And did she know you were my wife?"

“Our acquaintance was an accident, — never mind the details of it, — but we quickly became friends. When she told me of the work she had to do for Mr. Joe Blake and asked me to go with her to your rooms and read the poems to her, I told her the story, and from that hour we were sworn friends. She tried all she could, then and afterward, to persuade me to reveal myself to you and seek a restoration of the old relations. She told me how good a man you were; how gentle, how compassionate, how impulsive, how true. Indeed, she pleaded too eloquently, perhaps. The warmth of her pleading convinced me that you had won her love, and that if you were free you would offer her yours in return. So her pleading had an effect the precise opposite of that which she intended. I decided that I had had my chance for your love and had recklessly thrown it away. I decided that I would die, and leave you and her to be happy together. I tried to die in fulfilment of that plan, but she prevented, and then she exacted a promise of me that I would make no more efforts of that kind. She said and swore to me that while she held you to be the best and kindest and most generous of men, she — well,

you understand how women put such things to each other."

"Then it was a needless panic I fell into," said Joe Blake, "when I got to thinking she might learn to love me! She knew all the time that I was a married man?"

"Yes. And yet the panic was not altogether a needless one. There was yourself to consider, you know, and she, too, had a claim upon you, as you did not know that she knew. I had disappeared, and — well, at any rate your conduct was that of the illimitably honorable and generous man that you are. I think I love you better for that than for anything else."

Blake remained silent and meditating for a time. At last he said: —

"How we have all been groping in blind alleys!"

"Yes," Carolyn replied; "but at last you and I have discovered the outlet to ours."

"Yes, thank God, we have!"

XXX

AN INTERRUPTED INTERVIEW

WHEN Stanfield sat down in front of Miss Imboden that evening in pursuance of the arrangement already made, there was a look as of light in his eyes.

“You have been displeased with me of late,” he began, “and from your point of view your displeasure was justified. From mine it was by no means so. I have not been able to overcome certain obstacles until to-day, or even to explain their existence. Now they are completely cleared away. There remains only the fact that I do not know who I am. I do not know who my father or my mother was or is. I do not know whether I am well born or ill born. I must tell Winifred of all that.”

“But why should she care to know?”

“Why, because I intend to ask her to be my wife, and my ignorance of my own origin may influence her inclination.”

Miss Imboden manifested no surprise at Stanfield's declaration. She replied in an entirely placid voice: —

"You are equally ignorant of Winifred's origin. Have you no purpose to ask about that, before you ask her to be your wife?"

"No. I know Winifred, and that is enough. But it is due to her that I shall tell her of my ignorance of myself."

"Have you never suspected who Winifred is?"

"No. If you were a married woman or a widow, I might have thought that she was your daughter. But as it is —"

"As it is, you suspect nothing. Well, let me enlighten you. I would not have done so if you had not already told me you meant to ask her to be your wife. Now that you have decided upon that, I may tell you that Winifred Fair is half-sister to Miss Imboden."

Stanfield sat as if stunned. Presently he gasped out: —

"Then of course she — of course I cannot ask her to marry me?"

"But why not?"

"Why, are you not my mother?"

"Your mother! No, man. Why did you think so?"

"I do not know. Something in your manner or in your treatment of me — I don't know what — has led me to believe that for a considerable time."

"You have misjudged," she said in her calm, level voice. "I have never been married, and you are in no way related — no, I must correct that and say rather that you are in no way *akin* to me. There is a relationship and a close one, but it is not one of blood, and there is no relationship whatever between you and Winifred except such as you and she have yourselves established."

Stanfield relaxed into his easy chair, saying simply: —

"Tell me all you can or all you will about it, please."

"Listen, then. Do you remember that day at sea when you wantonly ordered a bottle of champagne and poured it into the sea, by way of illustrating to your tutor the feeling you had of a want of liberty, in spite of your perfect freedom?"

Stanfield felt himself positively startled by the minuteness of this woman's knowledge of things which he had thought were known only to him-

self. Miss Imboden gave him no time for answer. She went on with her questioning instead.

"Do you remember that a radical change was made immediately afterward in your affairs? Do you remember that what you complained of as a Special Providence that provided abundantly for your wants and gave you a large degree of freedom while denying you liberty and personal initiative suddenly changed its method? Do you remember that when that Special Providence suggested a year's travel over this country, you were left free to choose for yourself where you would go, and all the rest of it? Do you remember that day out on the bluff facing the seal rocks at San Francisco, when your tutor told you you were to choose your college and your profession for yourself?"

"Obviously you know the whole story of my life far better than I do," said Stanfield, in amazement. "I sincerely wish you would tell me of it if you are free to do so."

"I am free to do so now, though until now I have thought it inadvisable. You will understand the reason of that when you learn all the facts of the story. It is not altogether a pleasant story for me to tell, though at my time of life

one ought not to shrink from the memory of disagreeable things that occurred in one's youth. But when I begin telling the story I do not want to be interrupted till it shall be finished, and there is not time for that to-night. You tell me you have two patients whom you must see before bedtime."

At that moment the telephone rang and Miss Imboden answered it. After she had received the message she turned to Stanfield and said hurriedly —

"You must go at once. Deborah tells me that your assistant, Dr. Bradish, wants you to come as quickly as possible to the Maxim residence. He says it is a life-and-death case, and the family want you to be there in person. Go at once. I'll see you to-morrow evening. Try to arrange it so that we may not be interrupted."

Great as the hurry was, Stanfield paused to ask one question: —

"When will Winifred sail for home?"

"You shall yourself determine that to-morrow evening," answered Miss Imboden. "Deborah will furnish us a list of sailing days for all the steamers from the other side. You must go now."

XXXI

MISS IMBODEN BREAKS DOWN

THE little that Miss Imboden had been able to tell Stanfield in their interrupted interview served only to set him wondering. He had previously persuaded himself that this woman must be his mother, concealing the relationship for reasons of her own. But he had now learned from her that she was in no way akin to him, and at the same time he had learned how minute and how intimate her knowledge was of his own early life, how perfectly she knew those things which he had been all his life trying to find out.

He was worse puzzled than ever by this half-revelation, and during the twenty-four hours that passed before their next interview he blindly groped among the facts known to him and the possibilities conjured up by his imagination in search of some explanation. But no theory that he could frame seemed to fit the facts or to account for them.

Obviously Miss Imboden, for some reason of her own, had kept a minute watch upon him during his boyhood, his youth, and his young manhood — a watchfulness that, as it seemed to him, only a mother's interest could have inspired. He was convinced also that the interest she had taken in introducing him into the practice of medicine, which, by reason of his character and capacity, had now grown to large proportions, had been prompted by something more than mere friendship. He could not understand the matter at all, and he was eager for that promised second conference which should give him a larger light.

He was at pains to see all his patients in person that day, and to explain to each of them that he had an imperative engagement for the evening, wherefore his very capable assistant must take his place on the evening round, with liberty to summon him in any case of extreme necessity.

"It is my own story, chiefly," said Miss Imboden, when the two were comfortably seated in her apartments that evening, "that I must tell you. Your story is incidental to it.

"My father was an enormously rich man, as you may have judged from my own unhappy condition in that respect. He was not born rich, but he

had a genius for what they call 'financial combination,' and he became a miracle worker in the financial world. His great opportunity came in that period, after the Civil War ended, when the policy of combining a multitude of individual railroad lines into great systems was begun. In the execution of that policy he quickly accumulated a vast fortune. I have every reason to believe that in doing so he greatly benefited the country and commerce, and that in most cases the people owning the stock and bonds of the railroads he absorbed were enriched in the process. Little lines that had not been paying running expenses before became great properties when he made them parts of his system, connecting them in every direction with other roads and converting them into parts of great through lines for freight and passenger traffic. Their stocks and bonds, which had been nearly worthless before, rose rapidly in value. The interest on their bonds, which had been defaulted until foreclosure seemed the only way out, was paid promptly under the new system. Their stock certificates, which had come to be regarded almost as waste paper by those who had contributed the money to build the roads, began to earn dividends, so that their

selling value increased enormously. In one conspicuous case, where a long line of railroad had been built by stock subscriptions from the people living and owning property along the line, the road had fallen so manifestly into decay and insolvency that my father bought up more than half the entire stock at twelve cents on the dollar or less — much of it for less. Then he put the road into good condition with money raised by a new bond issue, made it a part of one of his systems, and within a year or two those original stockholders who had refused to sell were able to dispose of their holdings at a dollar and a half for every dollar they had invested.

“I am telling you all this because there is another side to the picture — a much darker side — and I want you to understand that while some of the millions I now control by inheritance, were evilly and dishonestly got, the greater part of them were the just reward of a great public service. We will come to the darker side of the picture presently.

“It was during those earlier years of my father’s success as a financier that I met your father, Jack Stanfield.”

“Then I really have a father?” interrupted the young man, with eager interest.

"You had. He is dead now," said the woman, with some evidences of emotion in her voice and manner.

"I met him at the White Sulphur Springs in Virginia. My father went there in order that he might see the financial people, with whom he was in frequent negotiation, without attracting attention. You see, if he saw any man except by seeming accident, all the guessers set to work at once to find out what properties the man 'represented,' and to conjecture what new combination my father was planning. Such guessing would set a horde of speculators on the *qui vive* to buy or sell stocks in anticipation of what my father was supposed to be trying to do.

"I was a very young woman, then, and my vanity was flattered by the attentions paid me. I did not understand that such attentions might not be due entirely to any personal charm of my own, but might in a larger degree be inspired by respect for my father's wealth, for his fame as a financier of commanding ability, and still more by the certainty that he could and would put any young man who should marry me with his approval in the way of becoming a great financier on his own account. But my father understood

all this, if I did not, and he very jealously guarded me against the fortune hunters and the opportunity hunters. In some cases he simply told young men that their attentions to me were unwelcome and then informed my mother and me of what he had done. In other cases he contented himself with a mere hint to me that a certain young man was 'undesirable,' or that another young man 'did not please him.' And as I was not particularly attracted by any of these, the hint was sufficient. I had only to have 'previous engagements' when these men offered me attentions, and as I always had in fact an abundant supply of such previous engagements, the desired discouragement was easy enough.

"But when Jack Stanfield came into my life the case was very different. He was a dashing young man, a graduate of West Point, and until recently a subaltern officer in the regular army. Tall, straight of limb as you are, handsome as you are, and full of spirit as you are, he was precisely the man to appeal to a romantic girl's imagination. He had made a reputation for courage and capacity, which added to his fascination. In an Indian fight he had been cut off with a mere handful of men. He had quickly

seized upon a strategically advantageous position, and there, with heroic determination, he had fought the savages to a standstill. He had tried to hold out until help should come, but no help came. Those from whom he had expected it had been massacred, and so he was left alone there in the lava beds, with his little following, to fight the thing out. And he fought it out so successfully that the Indians, after their habit of inconstancy, at last withdrew, so that with the remnant of his little band he was able to escape and make his way to the nearest military post.

“For this conspicuous gallantry he had been commended in General Orders, and brevetted to a much higher rank than any that he had as yet held. But actual promotion to that higher rank was impossible under laws that sharply limited the number of officers of each grade in the army, and in his impatience with the law-restricted profession to which he had been bred, Jack Stanfield resigned his commission, determined to seek freer opportunity in civil life.

“As you know a good deal of human nature, Field, you will easily understand that a young and romantic girl, such as I was, was easily fascinated by such a man as Jack Stanfield. His personal

qualities strongly reënforced the romance of his career as an appeal to my imagination. To all women he was courteous in an extreme degree; to those women who in the least degree deserved it, he was chivalrously deferential. This was equally true whether the women in question were young or middle-aged or elderly; whether they were pretty or the reverse; whether they were married or single; whether they had the tempers of angels or those of catamounts. All the women with whom he had the slightest contact were his admirers — many of them almost his worshippers.

“In his relations with men he was always scrupulously courteous, at least within those bounds of conversation and conduct that the laws of good breeding fix upon the demeanor of gentlemen; but behind and beneath all that there was in his manner toward men a certain well-bred insolence, a certain assumption of conscious and recognizable superiority, a certain challenge, that mightily fascinated women. You may not understand what I mean by that, but a young woman would. You have the same thing strongly marked in your character, but differently presented. It is that which has made your success in your profession so prompt and so conspicuous. Your self-confi-

dence — being well founded — inspires confidence in others. They trust you implicitly. They accept your judgments as indisputable. They obey you upon instinct, as it were.

“Pardon me, I mention these personal things only in order that you may the better understand when I tell you that Jack Stanfield quickly won my love. The one passion of my life was for him, and when our engagement was whispered about among the guests at the White Sulphur, I became at once the most envied and — by the young women, at least — the most jealously hated of women.

“Your father wanted the wedding to be a quiet one and immediate. My father objected. He pointed out that if a man in his position and of his great wealth should fail to give his daughter a conspicuously public wedding with all the accessories of rejoicing in the event, suspicion would instantly arise that he disapproved of the marriage. It might even be hinted that he had discovered something in the young man’s character or life that rendered him unwelcome to the father of the woman he was to marry. You understand that my father was rich enough to find out whatever he wanted to know,

and he was accustomed to find out. He kept in his employ a considerable company of men whose sole business it was to investigate and report to him. Everybody knew that, and so if my wedding should be other than the conventional one, the fact would instantly produce a crop of unpleasant rumors, and it might be that even the newspapers would get hold of such rumors and exploit them, making a veiled mystery of the affair, and making things generally disagreeable.

“So my father insisted upon a public marriage after a formal announcement of the engagement, and after a wide distribution of invitations. He had ‘investigated’ Lieutenant Stanfield, and, as he said to me, the more he investigated, the better pleased he was with the young man. His career at West Point had been one of distinction in scholarship, athletics, and military attainment. His career in the army had culminated, as I have told you, in an achievement of courage and capacity which had been deemed worthy of a mention in General Orders, and a very unusual brevet promotion. His family relations in Virginia, whence he came, were excellent, and finally, while his means were not large, — his family fortunes having been ruined by the Civil War,

— he was not an impecunious fortune hunter. Indeed, he had received many good offers for his services as an engineer, and he had only to choose between them, now that he had resigned his commission in the army. My father, of course, with his vast railroad interests, could give him at once an immeasurably better place than any of these, and he planned to do so, making of the appointment a wedding present, and announcing it on the evening of the wedding.”

At this point Miss Imboden’s extraordinary calm deserted her. She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes, and presently she said:—

“Field, you must wait. I cannot tell you the rest of this story to-night. It is too painful in the memories it recalls, for no woman who ever lived and loved has worshipped a man as I did your father. Go away now, and let me recover my self-control. I will tell you the rest at another time. Go quickly, or I shall break down in a way altogether unworthy of my maturity of years.”

Stanfield obeyed at once. He went home, where he found a number of patients awaiting him who simply would not accept the services of his assistant in lieu of his own. He busied himself with their maladies for an hour or two. Then

he sat down in his office to reflect, and this is the way in which his meditations ran:—

“Obviously my father was a scoundrel. Nothing short of that could have stopped the marriage of him and Miss Imboden, after the engagement was announced, the wedding presents made, and all the preparations for the ceremony completed. I wonder what sort of scoundrel he was. I wonder in what particular act of scoundrelism he was found out. I am sorry she had to break off her narrative before telling me that.”

Then he sat still for a while, meditating these things. At last he arose and began to pace the floor, still searching his mind with questions that it could not answer.

“I wonder who my mother was. I wonder what sort of woman it was who married my father after his iniquity was exposed, as it must have been, in order to break off a marriage already so conspicuously advertised as that one was. I wonder if I have any drop of decent blood in my veins, any heritage at all of character that may justify me in asking such a woman as Winifred to become my wife. I must simply wait and see.”

But he could not wait in patience. He could neither rest nor sleep. He must have human

companionship of some sort, and to that end he went to the telephone and called up Joe Blake.

"I wonder what you and Carolyn are doing at this hour of the night," he said over the wire.

"Oh, that's easily answered," Blake replied. "Carolyn is combing her hair, and I am trying to write a chapter in my new novel. But neither of those occupations amounts to a life-and-death case, and if you want either of us, we'll suspend them. Carolyn's comb must be pretty well worn out by this time, anyhow, and my imagination is scarcely more brilliant than the snuff of a blown-out candle. So we're ready for anything. What do you want, old fellow?"

"I want to go to you two and sit with you for an hour or two. I am in a mood of desperate depression. I can't tell you about it or its cause, for the reason that I don't know all the facts yet. But I must have genial and congenial human society. So if you two night-owls don't mind, I want to go to you for an hour, and sit in the lamplight, and feel that I am still not without friends in the world. I am groping, as you have put it, in a blind alley, and I need a little of your light."

"Come to us at once," answered Blake. "We're

good for an all-night sitting. While you're on your way, I'll send out for something to eat — a couple of cobblestones, half a dozen turnips, and a pitcher of buttermilk, so that we may make a night of it. Come at once."

Then turning to Carolyn, Joe Blake dropped his tone of banter and said: —

"Poor Stanfield is in some sort of distress of mind, and he's coming over to be cheered up. What is there in the place fit for the chafing dish? Find out while I'm gone after some oysters and that sort of thing. I suppose there's cheese for a rabbit, and sherry for a newburg?"

"Yes," she answered instantly. "We've everything we need except some oysters and some crackers."

"All right, I'll have them here before he comes, and remember, dear, that a cheerful face, a cordial hand clasp, and a joyous voice will mean more to him than all the rest. Stanfield isn't a man of the weak, weepy kind. When he appeals for comradeship and cheer, you may be sure he needs both very badly."

"I think I understand," she said.

XXXII

MISS IMBODEN'S ROMANCE

TWO or three hours of cheery converse with the Blakes served to bring Stanfield's perturbed spirit under control again. There were warmth and light and affection for him there. There was fun over the chafing dish, and above all there was a sympathy that he felt, although no mention was made of his need of it. And when at last he returned to his own home, he felt that whatever the sins of his father might have been, and no matter what sort of woman his still unknown mother might have been, he had in himself qualities that had served to win for him the affection of Joe Blake and his wife.

The thought was a consolation to his spirit, and after a time he succeeded in wooing sleep to his eyelids and peace to his soul.

It was with a resolute mind, therefore, that he sat down with Miss Imboden the next evening prepared to hear what else she had to tell him.

She was a very methodical person, and so she began precisely where she had left off.

“Our wedding was less than two days ahead of us,” she said, “when my father came to me in anger and exasperation of spirit, saying:—

“‘I have just learned of facts which render this marriage impossible; Jack Stanfield has a wife already.’

“I did not believe the statement, and I told my father so. For answer he said:—

“‘I wish I could share your incredulity, but unfortunately the facts are too well attested for that, and Stanfield has himself admitted them to me. He wanted to come to you with his explanation, but I forbade that. I don’t know whether his explanation is true or false, but I promised to tell you what it is, and if you care to listen, I will tell you now—or rather half an hour hence, after I have set a number of clerks at work cancelling the invitations and returning the presents you have received, with the statement in explanation that Miss Imboden has withdrawn her consent to the intended marriage.’

“When he had completed these arrangements he returned to me and told me the story. In substance it was this: During his cadet days at

West Point your father had secretly married your mother, who was the daughter of an old family, living not far from West Point. The marriage was kept secret, for the reason that should it be made known it would compel the young cadet's resignation from the Military Academy, and so put an end to his education and his career. He became so anxious on this subject that at the time of his graduation, when the ball occurred, his neglect of the woman who was supposed to be his fiancée, but who was in fact his wife, was conspicuous — almost ostentatious. The result was that she withdrew from the scene in the midst of the festivities, and the next day sent him a letter bidding him a final farewell.

“He accepted the dismissal, took his commission, and went West to serve in the army.

“Now, according to his story, he heard no more from his wife for a year. Then came news to him, which he believed, that she was dead, — having died in childbirth. I do not know whether your father's statements as to that were true or untrue. He was a brave man and upon occasion he could tell the truth to his own disadvantage with an unflinching front. But on the other hand, upon occasion, he could lie mightily, and very coura-

geously stand by his lies. After all, it doesn't matter. He protested to my father that until that second day before the time appointed for our wedding he had firmly and fully believed that his wife was dead and that he was free.

"The event, of course, ended my life as a marriageable woman. Women often fancy several men in succession, and failing to marry one, marry another. Sometimes women marry a second time after their first husbands have died. It is all innocent enough, because in such cases there has never been any such thing as a passionate love and so there is no disloyalty involved in the transfer of mere affection from a lover lost to a lover gained, or from a husband dead to a new husband. But when a woman of warm blood once gives her love to a man, there is an end of all possibility of change. A second love would be sacrilege to her; the mere withdrawal of her love an impossibility.

"But under circumstances such as mine there may be a change in the direction, the purpose, the activity of love. It may lose its desire in utter unselfishness. It may take on altruistic purposes in lieu of those that considered self-happiness.

"In my case it did so, I think. As soon as I

had had time to consider the situation, I wrote a letter to your father, urging him by all the love he had felt for me, and as the only recompense he could make to the love I had given him, to return to your mother, renew his obligations, and do all that lay in his power to make her happy.

“Then I sought out your mother and asked her forgiveness for the wrong I had unconsciously done her. Your mother was a noble woman, Field Stanfield. She was altogether good and refined and lovely. She and I quickly learned to love each other, and while, under the circumstances, we naturally could not see each other in any open and recognized way, we in fact spent many loving hours together during the few months that elapsed before she went abroad with your father. It was then that I first learned to know you — a little fellow only a year or so old.

“Then came separation. Your father secured a high appointment in the army of the Khedive of Egypt, and he and your mother went to Cairo to live, so that I never saw either of them again.

“A few years later there came to me a frantically sad letter from your mother. She told me your father had adopted the Mahomedan religion, polygamy and all, and had taken a new wife. She

said that if she could have secured possession of you, she would have fled to America with you to bring you up and to educate you into the manhood that your father had so terribly missed. But your father had removed you from her care and had placed you in a harem in Cairo, to be educated by slaves and to become a pacha fully indoctrinated with the religion of the prophet.

“Her grief was for you, not for the loss of your father’s love. I suppose that when a loving woman becomes a mother she transfers enough of affection from her husband to her child to make of the child thereafter the object of her supreme concern. However that may be, your father had by his own act forfeited all claim to your mother’s loyalty, and the instinct of motherhood prompted her to think of your rescue as the one supremely important object in life. She had made all the efforts she could, with her meagre means, for your father had put her upon a mere pittance as an allowance when she had refused to enter his harem as a sort of ‘back-number’ wife, and she had all the power and influence of the Khedive’s court in opposition to her.

“She begged me to save you if possible, and then she went and threw herself into the Nile.

"I regarded her dying message as a charge as binding upon my conscience and my life as if God in person had delivered it to me. I set to work at once. I employed the man whom you afterward knew as your tutor, Mr. Bellamy, to secure possession of your person. He knew nothing of me in the transaction, and he never knew anything of me. All our relations were maintained through my lawyers. He had lived in the East, just as he had lived pretty nearly everywhere else in the world, and he knew the ways of the East. I gave him limitless command of money, exacting only that he should secure possession of your person and take you to Europe. I think he had little difficulty in accomplishing the purpose. He knew the ways of the East. He knew how perfect a master key money is there, and by the expenditure of a few thousands of dollars he secured your delivery to him at a village in Normandy.

"It was necessary from the first to guard against the possibility that your father should discover you and reclaim you to his own control. The mere statement of that fact will explain to you why I did not have you brought to America and educated here in American ways. I made

such amends as I could by instructing your tutor to direct your reading into American channels, and especially to see to it that you should learn American history and be brought into American sympathy by the reading of American biography.

“From the beginning I required that your tutor — whom I paid liberally enough to cover the service twice over — should keep a diary, setting forth not only a record of your progress in your studies, but also a minute account of your moods, your utterances, and your intellectual tendencies. That is how I knew about your exploit with the champagne. I required him once a week to send that diary to me, through the law firm, and all my orders to him with respect to your education were based upon the record thus laid before me. Every steamer brought me a minute report of everything that might in any way guide me in directing your education, and as well as I knew how I tried to direct it with an eye single to your best development of manly character. I wanted you to be such a man as I had once believed your father to be — such a man as I had loved and your mother had loved.”

Here Miss Imboden left the room for a few minutes. On her return she resumed her narra-

tive as placidly as if the story had been one of the utmost inconsequence.

"When your tutor reported that you were chafing under a sense of governance, a lack of liberty, and of personal initiative, I set to work as well as I could to repair the wrong. You remember what happened. I ordered that you should arrange and conduct your travel year for yourself, without even a suggestion from him. In the same way I forbade him even to advise you as to your choice of a University, as to your selection of a profession, or as to anything else. When you finished at the University, I ordered him to take himself completely out of your life and go away, anywhere he pleased. He was glad enough to do so, as I fancy you had become something vastly more independent than a pupil, while he had laid away quite all the money he needed to secure a comfortable old age for himself. He was an entirely cold-blooded person, who really cared only for such things. I suppose he did not manifest any particular emotion even when he bade you a final farewell?"

"He gave me no farewell at all," answered Stanfield. "He told me one day that he was going away presently, and that thereafter the

money for my maintenance would be deposited in bank to my credit. Then he turned to his books, and when I went back a few hours later to have a talk with him, he had gone, leaving not even so much as a good-by or a God bless you behind."

"That is what I should have expected of him," she answered. "He was a minutely faithful man, but the only soul he had was a conscience for details. Still he served my purpose better than another might, and he educated you wonderfully well."

"I am disposed to credit you with that," Stanfield said. "Bellamy was a mere machine. Yours was the intelligence behind the machine."

"In a way, yes; but, after all, I had to work through agents, and he was an accomplished and in his way a perfect agent. I must explain that. So long as your father lived he was bent upon finding you and attaching you to himself. That was what your dead mother had feared, and it was to prevent that that I undertook to do for her the work of rescue that she could not do for herself. It was necessary that I should keep you always in charge of a very resolute, a very discreet man, who should also be a good

teacher. Mr. Bellamy fulfilled all the conditions. I could implicitly trust his resolution, his discretion, and his teaching capacity. During all the years of your minority I kept a deposit of ten thousand dollars in the chief bank in the town nearest him, against which he was authorized to draw to the limit in case of any emergency which your father's efforts to regain control of you might create.

"Now I have told you the story of my romance. I am very weary, and you must go. To-morrow evening, if you can spare me an hour or two, I will tell you the rest of the story."

XXXIII

THE END OF MISS IMBODEN'S STORY

STANFIELD was growing restless and impatient now. He had conceived the purpose of going to Europe and returning by the same ship that was to bring Winifred home. But Miss Imboden was not a person to be hurried, and until she should finish her story he could make no other arrangement. She was a sagacious person, however, and she said to him, when they met on the next evening:—

“You are growing impatient, as I clearly understand. But Saturday is sailing day for the fast steamers, and Saturday is still two days off, and I have not yet ordered Winifred home. So you must possess your soul in patience while I tell you the rest of the story.”

Stanfield was almost aghast at the sagacity Miss Imboden showed in thus anticipating his purpose. But he was rapidly growing accustomed to the thought that this woman knew everything

concerning him that he himself knew. He settled himself, therefore, to listen to the remainder of the story.

"Soon after our marriage was broken off," Miss Imboden began, "my father died. I don't know whether the two events were in any way connected with each other or not, but the one followed closely upon the heels of the other. My father left my mother a vast sum of money — more than we had supposed that he owned. He left to me his residuary estate, and when I came to look it up as the sole executrix of his will, I was astonished to find that my portion exceeded my mother's three to one. I had long known that my father was rich, but neither my mother nor I had ever dreamed that his wealth amounted to half the sum he had left to my mother, and when I found how vast a possession he had left to me in addition, I was positively appalled.

"In the process of settling the estate I learned that darker side of the story of which I spoke to you the other night. One railroad company sued the estate for many millions of dollars, and when I had all the facts before me, I decided that the money was not rightfully mine, and as I was sole heir to the residuary estate, I made restitution

without letting the matter come to a trial, which would have advertised my father's wrong-doing.

"In another case I found that my father had leased a railroad, and had made it a part of one of his systems for a brief term of years. It was shown to me that during that term of years he had looted the railroad. He had exchanged its good rolling stock for the worn-out equipment of another road which he owned, and he had taken its new hundred-pound steel rails for use on his own railroad, replacing them with the old and badly laminated iron rails of his other roads. It appeared that the transaction was entirely legal, but that did not make it honest, and at a cost of millions I reimbursed the looted road.

"Then I set to work to find out what else I could do to make restitution for the wrongs my father had committed, but except here and there and in small amounts I could find nothing in my heritage that did not seem to me to have come to my father honestly. As I told you the other night, my father's operations seemed to me in most cases to have benefited everybody concerned. Nevertheless the enormous wealth he had left me — for it was enormous even after I had made all I could of restitution — weighed upon me as ill-got gain,

which I knew of no way of restoring to its proper owners. So I set to work in an endeavor to return the money to my fellow-men and women in charity. You know the history of that, and you know how true it is, as your friend Joe Blake says, that in the main I have been groping in blind alleys.

“A few years after my father’s death my mother married a second time. Her husband, Roger Fair, was a scholar, full of human sympathy, but utterly ignorant of the world and therefore utterly useless to me as an adviser in my perplexity. Winifred was born, and not long afterward both my mother and Roger Fair died. I took Winifred as a mere baby and brought her up. She inherited my mother’s large fortune, and the fortune of her own father, which was considerable. My one fear for her was that she might fall a prey to some fortune hunter when she should grow up, and so I concealed her identity and her wealth. She was so much younger than I was, that this was easy to do, particularly as I have never had anything to do with the gossip-mongering people who call themselves Society, with a capital S. Winifred was supposed to be an adopted child of mine, and it was not until she was twelve years old or so that even she knew the relationship be-

tween us. I was her guardian, and I always spoke of her as my ward. The variance in our names made the rest easy. Moreover, we rarely lived long enough in one place at that time to excite inquiry. I needn't go into that. When Winifred was old enough I explained my purpose to her and she assented to it. She alone knew of our relationship as sisters, and she had always been accustomed to call me 'Miss Imboden,' so that it was easy to go on doing so. I venture to say that even you have never suspected the facts.'

"I certainly never did," he answered. "I supposed that Winifred was an orphan — probably a destitute orphan originally — whom you had made your companion and assistant, as any wealthy woman might do with a girl at once agreeable and capable."

"That is what I meant you to suppose," she answered placidly, "and I should never have undeceived you if you had not declared to me your intention to pay your court to her. I was resolved that no man should marry her for money, or anything else except herself. But when you told me what you did the other night, and I reminded you that you did not know anything of Winifred's origin, you promptly and very manfully

declared that, knowing *her*, you did not need to know the rest. That decided me to tell you the whole story.

“Now let me mention another matter. You doubtless wondered when you were notified after your period of foreign study that your quarterly allowance would thenceforth be cut off. It was my thought to discover whether or not you were worthy. You had had your education, your postgraduate course in Europe, and all the rest of it. I wanted to see what you would do with it all. You were a grown man then and capable of taking care of yourself. You did the brave, manly thing. You set up an office. You reduced your expenditures to the minimum. You availed yourself of the opportunity Joe Blake offered you, of earning your expenses by newspaper writing. In brief you acquitted yourself right manfully. Then, as I needed your assistance in my work, I sent for you, and you know the rest of the story. You have built up a really great practice of your own, quite independently of the work I have given you to do. I am altogether pleased with you, Field Stanfield, and if you wish to sail for England on either of the German steamers that leave on Saturday, I will cable Winifred to return by the

Teutonic, which sails from Liverpool on the 16th of the month. Now good night. I have already sat up beyond my accustomed hour, and old women cannot afford to dissipate, you know."

XXXIV

ON DECK AT SUNSET

FROM Liverpool to Queenstown is a run of a night and half a day, during which time everything is in the turmoil of first adjustment. The voyage does not really begin until the ship passes Kinsale Head, westward bound.

Then, during the first day out, the passengers decide with something like finality whether they are to enjoy the voyage or to suffer it. The timorous ones who have predestined themselves to seasickness retreat to their cabins or wrap themselves in their rugs and become unconscious cocoons in their steamer-chairs on deck — objects of no further concern to anybody on board except the deck stewards, who expect tips at the end of the trip for looking after them, so far at least as to see that they are not washed overboard. Then the rest of the passengers begin to get acquainted with each other.

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Miss Imboden was an artist in her way. In cabling Winifred to return by the *Teutonic*, she gave no hint of her reasons for the choice of a steamer or the selection of a date. She simply cabled her request, knowing that Winifred would implicitly obey it, as if it had been a command.

Field Stanfield boarded the ship at Queenstown, making an anxiously close connection, for the reason that his outward-bound ship was a day late in reaching the Irish port.

It was not until Kinsale Head was mistily astern that he found Winifred. She had been in her cabin when he came aboard from the tender. She had bought some laces and other souvenirs from the sturdy Irish women who, in Queenstown harbor, always climb over the high, steep sides of the ship, by the aid of a rope, and with the instinct of the woman strong upon her, she wanted to inspect and arrange them by the light of her cabin's bull's eyes.

Stanfield wandered about the decks, uneasily looking for her and finding her not. He was sure of her as a woman of the sort that does not grow seasick, and besides, the ship was steaming upon a level keel through the outer reaches of the harbor, so that even the most determined devotee



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of *mal de mer* could have found no excuse at that time for pretending seasickness.

A sudden fear seized him that perhaps Winifred had missed the ship at Liverpool. He rushed at once to the smoking room in search of the passenger list, and to his consternation he found that neither Winifred's name nor Mrs. Calory's was printed upon it.

He promptly fell into panic. He had hurriedly crossed the ocean in order that he might cross it again upon this ship and in Winifred's company. The ship had quitted the Irish port and was rapidly leaving the Irish coast in the dim distance, with no possibility of another landing short of Sandy Hook, and he was alone — or felt himself to be so — for as to the other passengers, sick or well, they did not count in his reckoning.

After his restless fashion he walked first to the bow and then to the stern of the ship, where he stood for a time looking down at the turmoil of the waters, lashed by the rapid revolution of the great twin screws.

Finally he turned and strolled forward again. As he did so he caught sight of two women standing by the taffrail and looking over the side. One of them was Winifred, and in his exultation

he cared not at all for the personality or the presence of the other. Ignoring that other, he approached Winifred, seized her hand, drew it within his arm, and set out for the stern again. There he turned, just as the sun was sinking into the western sea, and said:—

“I have come to claim you, Winifred — and I thought I had missed you.”

He seized her, she not resisting, and passionately caressed her. He had planned a thousand things to say to her by way of prelude to this scene, and by way of preparation for it, and by way of explanation. But somehow none of those things seemed to need saying now. When the heart is young it is quick to understand.

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“But I really think you should apologize to Mrs. Calory,” said Winifred, half an hour later, as the two walked forward again along the deck, which was now unsteady enough to render the encircling of her waist by his strong arm at least excusable.

“I will apologize,” he said. “But I imagine she already understands.”

“I suppose she does,” Winifred replied.

THE END

